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SPECIMENS

OF

Early English Metrical Romances,

CHIEFLY WRITTEN

DURING THE EARLY PART

OF

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION,

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE

RISE AND PROGRESS OF ROMANTIC COMPOSITION

IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

BY GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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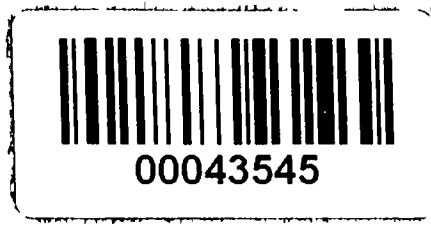
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Romances of Oriental Origin.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

SEVEN WISE MASTERS.

THE reader has seen, in the Appendix, No. I, to the General Introduction in the first volume, some account of a work written in the beginning of the 12th century by Petrus Alphonsus, to whom the French minstrels, the early Italian novelists, and the author of Gesta Romanorum, were indebted for a variety of stories translated by him from the Arabic, and perhaps originally furnished to the Arabians themselves by some of their eastern neighbours. Another work which our ancestors unquestionably borrowed from the East, and which, passing in succession through almost all the languages of Asia and Europe, preserved, under every change, the same degree of popularity which it had acquired in its native idiom, is the collection of fables vulgarly attributed to Pilpay or Bidpai. These indeed, as far as I know, were

never translated in their original state by our English minstrels: but there is a third work, equally of oriental origin, and of not less celebrity than either of the foregoing, which has furnished us with an English metrical romance, named in the Cotton. MS. "The Proces of the Sevyn Sages," or, to use the more familiar and popular title of the prose translation, "The Seven Wise Masters;" and it may be reasonably expected that the analysis of this romance should be preceded by a history of the different forms under which it has been successively exhibited.

This, however, is a matter of extreme intricacy, and which has never been completely investigated excepting by Mr. Douce, who, by pursuing the hints thrown out by Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Warton, &c., has traced a great part of the materials employed by our early fabulists to their remotest sources, and to whose notes I have been obliged for all the information which I can venture to offer on this obscure and difficult subject.

There is good reason to believe that the prototype of this romance was "The Book of the Seven Counsellors, or Parables of SENDEBAR or SANDABAR," an Indian philosopher, who is stated by *Ismael Sciah-hinsciah*, an Arabian compiler of a chronicle from Adam to the year of the Hegira 487

(A. D. 1094), to have lived about 100 years before the Christian æra*. He is sometimes called *chief of the sages of India.* These parables have been printed in Hebrew only, under the title of *Mischle Sandabar,* first at Constantinople 1517, and afterwards at Venice 1544 and 1608, at the end of another Hebrew work, entitled Divre Hajamim Schel Mosche; i. e. "The Words of the Days of Moses†." There is a MS. of them in the British Museum, among the Harleian MSS. No. 5449, written in a very bad hand. It has an anonymous Latin note, the substance of which is, that it had been translated out of the Indian language into Persian and Arabic, and from thence into Hebrew, by Rabbi Joel. The Latin title is "Historia de Rege et Filiis ejus ex Orient. *India.* Nomen ejus fuit Biebar." The word in Italics is written in a different hand, as is also the following note at the bottom of the page: "Historiola de Biebar Rege Indorum Orientalium et Filiis ejus." At the end of the MS., which consists of 56 leaves in small quarto, on a flying leaf, the contents of the work are again de-

* Assemanni Catal. Cod. MS. Orient. Biblioth. Medic. Laurent. et Palat. p. 141.

† Groddeck Descr. Rabbinic. apud Placcii Theatrum anonym. et pseudonym. Hamburgi 1708. p. 688; et Wolfii Bibl. Hebraic. i. 931.

scribed in these words: "In hac scilicet Historiolâ seu Fabulâ agitur de calliditate fœminarum, et quomodo *earum* prudentiâ filius regis Indiæ nomine Baïber a morte sit liberatus. Sandabar iste erat princeps sapientum Brachmanorum Indiæ, et magnam habet partem in totâ hac historiâ. In fine libri dicitur Sandabar obiisse annos natus 130." The word *earum* is evidently a mistake, and perhaps copied from Wolfius, who (Bibl. Hebr. i. 931) gives a similar description of the work; whilst Groddeck, who has also given an account of it, seems to ascribe the wisdom and prudence to Sandabar.

As we have no rational ground for hoping that the Indian original, if it ever existed, will again be brought to light, it is much to be wished that we could obtain a literal version of this antient copy, which is likely to be of little interest to the Hebrew scholar, but would be very valuable to the literary antiquary, and perhaps not unamusing to the general reader. Indeed it seems to be owing to a sort of fatality that we do not already possess such a translation, because it appears, by the Latin documents accompanying the Harleian MS. already mentioned, that Gilbert Gaulmin, professor of the Hebrew language at Paris, actually completed the work, which he illustrated with

notes, and intended for publication, but never fulfilled his intention. After his death, the learned Groddeck, professor of oriental languages at Leipsig, entered into the same engagement. It is also supposed that a Latin version by Wagenseil exists in MS. in the Senatorial library at Leipsig*; besides which, James Bonaventura Hepburn, a Scotchman of the order of Minims, a great traveller and learned Hebraist, and overseer of the oriental books in the Vatican, is said to have translated into Latin the Parables of Sandabar with the Gests of the Seven Wise Men†. In the mean time, the reader will have perceived that the foregoing documents are not even sufficient to explain to us whether Sandabar was the author of the book to which he has given his name, or only the essential character in the piece. Neither do we know any thing satisfactory concerning Rabbi Jool, nor even the time in which he lived, though there are reasons for supposing that he must have written as early as the middle of the 14th century.

After the Hebrew version of the Parables, the next in point of antiquity which occurs is in the Greek language, and known to the learned under

* Wolfii Bibl. Hebr. i. 931.

† Demster Hist. Eccles. Gent. Scot. p. 364, and Mackenzie's Scotish Writers, iii. 516.

the name of SYNTIPAS. Of this many MSS. are extant, but it is not easy to ascertain from what original it was immediately borrowed. A MS. cited by Du Cange professes to be translated from the Syriac*; as does a second imperfect one procured by the celebrated Busbequius from Constantinople, and now in the Imperial library at Vienna†; and a third, said to exist at Moscow, and to have been written before the 14th century. On the other hand, a copy in the British Museum professes to have been translated from the Persic so late as 1667‡. Monsieur Dacier has written an express dissertation on the Syntipas, of which he found a MS. of the 16th century, written on paper, in the French National Library, No. 2912. This pretends to be a literal version from the Syriac. It has an argument by the translator, followed by a short advertisement, stating that the same history had been written in Persic by one Musus or Moses. The outline of the story, as given by M. Dacier, is as follows.

Cyrus has seven wives, but no children. At length, after putting up prayers to Heaven, he has

* Dufresne Gloss. med. et infim. Græc. Ind. Auctor. p. 73

† Ness. Catal. Bibl. Cæs. Vindob. par. v. 171.

‡ Harl. MSS. No. 5560.

a son who is placed in the hands of a tutor: but the young prince, after a period of three years deriving no benefit from his instructions, is committed to the charge of the philosopher Syntipas, who engages to complete his education, and return him to his parents at the end of six months and as many days. He is conducted to a house on the walls of which his master had caused the planets, the history of the world, &c., to be painted for his instruction, and here becomes, within the stipulated time, so accomplished as to surpass his tutor's expectations. Syntipas, before he decides on reconducting the prince to his father, consults the stars concerning his destiny, and finds that his life will be in great jeopardy unless he can preserve, during seven days, a strict silence; which the prince undertakes to do. Syntipas resolves to conceal himself in the mean time, in order to avoid the natural resentment of the king on finding his son mute. Cyrus is, in fact, greatly enraged; and, being persuaded by his courtiers that Syntipas has given his son some medicine which has deprived him of speech, searches in vain for the philosopher. At length one of the king's wives undertakes to discover the cause of the prince's silence, and, in a private interview with him, attempts to seduce him to her embraces, offering to place him on the

throne by putting his father to death, on condition of his taking her to his bed. The prince, struck with horror at this atrocious proposal, and unable to preserve silence, replies, "Know, wicked woman, that I am for the present prohibited from answering you; but, at the end of seven days—" and then becomes mute as before. The disappointed woman in revenge accuses him of having attempted her chastity, and he is condemned to die. The king, however, has seven philosophers, who, suspecting the falsehood of the charge, engage to employ a day each in endeavouring to dissuade the king from executing the sentence. This leads, of course, to the stories, each philosopher relating two, and the princess replying with as many. The seventh day at last arrives, and the prince, breaking silence, relates the cause of it, and exposes the wickedness of his accuser. Cyrus now propounds as a question to the philosophers, Whether, if he had put his son to death, the prince, or the lady, or himself, would have been guilty of a crime? He is not satisfied with their opinion, and the question is at last resolved by the prince himself, in an apologue, to which he adds two other whimsical stories, of which, says M. Dacier, it is difficult to comprehend the moral. The lady is then ordered into court; and having confessed her

guilt, the king inquires of the philosophers what punishment she deserves. Very cruel tortures are proposed. She relates a story to prove that it is better to survive, even in a mutilated state, than to die. The prince then suggests, as a punishment better suited to the offence, that she should have her head shaved, and be publicly led through the city on an ass; and this sentence is immediately carried into execution. Cyrus, enchanted with his son's wisdom, demands of Syntipas how it happened that he had acquired so much knowledge in so short a time. He ascribes it to the influence of the star under which he was born, and tells a story to show that all education is useless where a malignant planet has presided at the child's nativity. This is the last story; and is followed by many moral questions put by the king to his son, who resolves them.

The next appearance of the Parables was in Latin. This is said to have been written by Jean de *Hauteselve*, or Altavilla, in Lorraine. Whether any copy of it be now existing is a matter of great uncertainty. Even its title is unknown; nor should we perhaps have ever heard of it, but for its translation into French verse, when it assumed the strange denomination of DOLOPATOS.

This singular work was first brought to light by Fauchet, who, in his account of the early French poets, ascribes it to one Hebers or Herbers, an ecclesiastic, whom he rightly supposes to have lived under the reign of Louis VIII., who died in 1226*. M. Dacier says that Hebers' translation is only known from fragments in Fauchet, and in Du Verdier, who copies Fauchet, and in a collection called "Le Conservateur" for Jan. 1760; the latter of which had been supplied from a MS. in the Sorbonne, which has since been sought for in vain†. He does not appear to have seen any MS. of it; for which reason it may be of use to point out one which has lately, at the request of Mr. Douce, been inspected by his friend the Abbé de la Rue, a gentleman well known to the English reader by his valuable essays on the early French poets, in the 12th, 13th and 14th volumes of the Archæologia. This MS. is in the National Library at Paris, is numbered 7535, and was written in the 13th century. It contains about 9000 verses. At the beginning are these lines,

Un blanc moine de bele vie,
De Halteselve l'Abeie,

* Œuvres de Fauchet, fo. 560, verso, edit. 1610, 4to.
† Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscr. xii. p. 557.

A ceste histoire novelée;
Par bel Latin l' a ordenée,
Herbers le velt en romans traire.

. . . . . .

Si com Dans Jeſians nous devise,
Qui en Latin l'ist[illegible] mist,
Et Herbers qui le romans fist:
Del Latin en romans le traist,
Ce fu il tens que la flors naist.

The history takes place under the reign of Augustus Cæsar. Dolospatos king of Sicily is the father of the young prince, who is called Lucinien. Virgil is his tutor.

Au tens qu' Augustus tenoit Rome,
Qui sires fu de tant prodome,
Fu nés un rois, molt noble hom,
Qui Dolospatos avoit nom.
Sages hom ert, et de grant los;
Por ce, ot nom Dolopatos.

Although several of the stories in this work are extremely licentious, Hebers has not scrupled to commit it to the care of a dignified ecclesiastic.

Hebers define ici son livre;
A l'evesque de Meaux le livre,
Qui Diex doint honor en sa vie*.

* Œuvres de Fauchet, fo. 561,

It has already been observed that it is not certain whether any copy of Hauteselve's Latin work be now remaining. There is indeed a book entitled "*Historia Calumniæ Novercalis* quæ Septem Sapientum inscribitur (sive Historia Heracliti, autore D. Joanne Monacho Abbatiæ vulgo dictæ Hauteselve seu Hauteseille)," printed at Antwerp by Gerard Leen, 1490, quarto. On this title, which is copied from the catalogue of the printed books in the king of France's library, vol. ii, p. 4. M. Dacier remarks, that the words in the parenthesis are not in the book itself; and that the editor, in a short preface, declares the title to be of his own invention, and that he has assumed the liberty of changing the names of the characters and correcting the style. The book is extremely rare; but Mr. Douce was convinced by a fragment of it which he inspected, that it was not Hauteselve's work, but substantially a different Latin history of the Seven Wise Men, which will be mentioned presently, newly written and arranged.

The next work to be noticed is one of which no account whatever has hitherto been given, though it will be found to merit some attention. It is a MS. of the 13th century in the French National Library, numbered 7595, in French verse, but by an anonymous author. There is no mention in

any part of it either of Hauteselve or of Herbers, and its bulk is not equal to more than one third of the Dolopatos. The emperor is Vespasian son of Mathusalem, and the wise men are Bacillas, Lentulus, Cato, Malquidas, Jesse, Damnas, and Birons. Mr. Douce believes, with great appearance of probability, that this work was the immediate original which gave rise to the many subsequent imitations in French prose, and of which our English metrical romance is a translation.

This poem, in lines of eight syllables, is to be found entire in the MSS. of the Cotton library (Galba. E. 9.), where it is entitled "The Proces of the Sevyn Sages." Mr. Douce had conjectured that it was composed about the end of the 14th century; but there is in the Auchinleck MS. a large fragment of it, consisting of 2630 lines; and as its composition must have preceded the transcription, and the age of the MS. itself has been ascertained with some accuracy, we cannot assign to the poem a later date than 1330.

Soon after the invention of printing, the Latin "Historia Septem Sapientum" appeared in Germany, and there were many editions of it without date, place, or printer's name. The earliest, perhaps, which occurs with a date, was printed at

Cologne by John Hoelhoff, in 1490, quarto, with cuts. Translations of it soon appeared in the German, Dutch, Italian, French, Spanish, and English languages. This is our "*Seven Wise Masters*," so truly delectable, till lately, to every school-boy, the first edition of which was printed by W. Copland, without date, but between 1548 and 1567. It was also translated into Scotish metre by John Rolland, in Dalkeith, "at the request of his *Ant Cait* (Aunt Kate) in Tanstelloun Castle, during the siege of Leith, 1560," and printed at Edinburgh in 1578, 1592, and 1631, octavo.

The last European imitation of the *Book of the Seven Counsellors* to be mentioned, belongs to the Italians, and was first printed at Mantua, 1546, duodecimo, under the title of "Erasto, doppo molti secoli ritornato al fine in luce, e con somma diligenza dal Greco fedelmente tradotto in Italiano." This was soon translated into French, and with the title of "Histoire pitoyable du Prince Erastus, Fils de Diocletien, nouvellement traduite de l'Italien en François," printed at Lyons by Gabriel Colier, 1565, octavo. Francis Kirkman, well known by his numerous translations of romances into English, printed, in 1674, octavo, a version of it under the title of "History of Prince Erastus,

son to the emperor Diocletian, and those famous philosophers called The Seven Wise Masters of Rome." He translated from the French Erastus, and says that he had compared it with the Italian original, and added *all* that had been written in English, meaning The Seven Wise Masters; but his assertion is not strictly true; as he has omitted two or three stories which are contained in the latter work. He tells us, in his preface, that the book of The Seven Wise Masters is in such estimation in Ireland, that it was always put into the hands of young children immediately after the horn-book. In 1684, another edition of Erastus was published by some person who has made use of Kirkman's work. This last is, however, a wretched abridgment.

It may be worth while to mention that the Italian writer of Erasto, if he really did consult a MS. of the Greek Syntipas, has taken so many liberties with it that his work by no means deserves the name of a translation. His introduction is considerably more diffuse than the Greek, and has many new incidents. The prince is committed to the care of seven philosophers, and not to one tutor. The name of Erastus, as well as those of the wise men, is apparently invented for the sole purpose of colouring the assertion in the title and

preface. The stories amount only to half the number of those in the Syntipas, in which circumstance it agrees with the Latin Historia Septem Sapientum; and from this it is most probably imitated.

We have thus traced our original, The Parables of Sandabar, through all its transmigrations in the European languages; but, if the reader's patience be not quite exhausted, it will now be proper to return upon our steps, for the purpose of noticing some circumstances which have tended not a little to embarrass and mislead the researches of many even diligent inquirers into the subject.

Towards the close of the 15th century, there issued from the press of some unknown German printer a singularly curious book, intitled "Directorium Humanæ Vitæ; alias, Parabole Antiquorum Sapientum," the prologue to which informs us that it was called "Liber *Belile et Dimne*;" that it originally appeared in the Indian language, and was successively translated into Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and lastly into Latin. The Latin translator was John of Capua, who lived about 1260; and although he has not expressly mentioned from what language he translated, there is internal evidence to warrant the presumption that he used a Hebrew copy. In this work *Sandabar* is named

as the Indian philosopher, who composed it at the instance of a king of India; and *Rabbi Joel* is generally regarded as the author of the Hebrew version, from which the Latin is supposed to have been taken. This odd coincidence would naturally lead to a supposition that the "Directorium" was taken from the "Mischle Sandabar;" yet it is in fact nothing more than an altered translation of a work long since known to the learned by the name of *Calilah u Damnah,* and to the world in general by the title of Pilpay's Fables, the Indian original of which is the *Heetopades* of Veeshnoo Sarma.

It is not easy to ascertain by what means the name of Sandabar made its way into the Latin "Directorium." It certainly is not in the Heetopades, where the name of the sage who relates the stories is Veeshnoo Sarma; neither is it from the other Oriental versions of the same work, because in the Persian and Turkish copies the philosopher is called Bidpay; and in the Arabic, or at least in the Greek version from the Arabic, made by Simeon Seth, and printed, with a Latin translation, by Starkins in 1697, he is not named at all. Neither does there seem to be any positive authority for ascribing a Hebrew translation of this work to Rabbi Joel, excepting that of Doni,

the reputed author of an Italian version, or rather imitation of the Directorium, who seems to have first introduced the name of Joel, inferring, perhaps, that he must have translated this work, as well as the Mischle, as being also composed by Sandabar.

Another source of confusion and perplexity arises from the perverse disposition of all the translators or imitators of the "Book of the Seven Counsellors" to alter and disfigure, though perhaps with the hope of improving, their immediate original. The several copies therefore are so much unlike, that only *one* story in the modern Erastus agrees with the Greek Syntipas, and this is also to be found in the Calilah u Damnah. (See Tyrwhitt, vol. ii. p. 492. 4to. edit.) Some stories in the Dolopatos are common to the Fables of Alfonsus, who, on the other hand, has one tale which is also in the Syntipas. It is not, therefore, a mere similarity in some of the materials which will enable us to trace the successive imitations of the Oriental fabulists to their original prototype; we are forced to examine the general design and outline of the work; and after having done so, it will but too frequently happen that the patient labour of the antiquary is productive of little amusement to the reader.

It only remains to be stated, that the following abstract is generally taken from the fragment in the Auchinleck MS., as being the most ancient copy now known to exist, and that the conclusion has been made up from the MS. in the Cotton library already mentioned. The latter is certainly more modern, by at least half a century, than the Auchinleck fragment, and is written in the Scotish dialect.

THE

SEVEN WISE MASTERS.

DIOCLETIAN, emperor of Rome, had a son named Florentin, who, after the death of his mother, engrossed his father's whole affection. For the purpose of giving a suitable education to this darling son, the emperor convened all the wisest and most learned men in the empire, from whom he selected seven masters, each of whom was directed to instruct the youth in one of the seven liberal arts. The sages accepted the honourable task with gratitude; and having first retired with their pupil to the Consistory, which, says our author, was a place in Rome where "men makes wisdom," they decided that it would be necessary to remove the youth from the enticements of the metropolis, and to erect a building, for the better prosecution of his studies, at some distance from the city. The spot selected for the purpose was a spacious *Verger* (orchard) on the banks of the Tiber,

already planted with all sorts of fruit-trees. In its centre they built an edifice, consisting of seven chambers, encompassing a vast square hall, on the walls of which were painted the *three parts of Donet* *, and the seven arts, viz., grammar, music, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, rhetoric, and physic. Here the young man, occupied only with his studies, and constantly transferred from one master to another, made a most rapid progress. In the fourth year of his education he began to dispute on logical questions; in the fifth year he was able "to argument of the stars and of the firmament;" and before the end of the sixth year he evinced a degree of acuteness which, not without reason, was considered by the wise men as truly miraculous.

With a view to ascertain the degree of his advancement in general science, they one night secretly placed under each of the four posts of his bed, four ivy-leaves, and, having performed the experiment, retired without wakening him. In the morning, when they attended him as usual, he no sooner opened his eyes than he began to survey the whole room with evident signs of astonishment, and on their inquiring into the cause of his surprise,

* The works of Donatus the grammarian.

" Par fay!" he said, " a *ferli* * cas!
" *Other* † ich am of wine drunk,
" Other the firmament is sunk,
" Other *wexen* ‡ is the ground,
" The thickness of four leaves round!
" So much, to-night, higher I lay,
" Certes, than yesterday."

The reader will readily believe that before the expiration of his seven years' study, this prodigy of attention had acquired all the science of his Seven Wise Masters.

Diocletian, perfectly happy in such a son, had hitherto borne without repining the solitude of widowhood; but his counsellors now urged him to marry again, and proposed to him a young princess of such exquisite beauty that the old monarch became violently enamoured of her, and soon appeared to forget, in her company, every other object of his affection. So completely were the perfections of Florentin obliterated from his memory, that he did not even mention his name to the empress: but as every other tongue was employed in his praise, she naturally became anxious to behold this paragon, and had no difficulty in persuading the emperor to summon him to court.

* wonderful. † either. ‡ or grown is the earth.

The Seven Masters were "disputing in their Latin" with their young pupil when they received the visit of the nobles appointed to signify the emperor's intention, and to attend the young prince during his solemn entry into Rome: and as the preparations for such a ceremony could not be suddenly completed, the imperial messengers were detained to dinner, and amused by the tales of minstrels; after which the Seven Wise Men prepared to consult the stars, as a necessary preliminary to the important expedition of the following day. Caton, the most expert of the seven, took a very deliberate survey of the moon, and discovered, from some untoward appearances on the face of that planet, that the first moment when the young prince, after his arrival at court, should open his lips, would prove fatal to him, and, very possibly, to all his instructors. This dreadful prophecy filled the whole company with consternation; but though Caton could not be suspected of falsifying or misunderstanding the moon's testimony, Florentin chose to examine the heavens in his turn; and having critically observed the aspect of a star almost in contact with the moon's limb, predicted from it, that if he could preserve his life during seven days, and pass that time without speaking, the danger which

menaced him would be passed, and he might expect many years of security and happiness.

This second prediction having been duly examined, and found conformable to all the rules of astrology, the Seven Wise Masters took comfort; and as their pupil observed to them that it would be most extraordinary if each of them were not able to save his life during a single day, they prepared to encounter the approaching danger with serenity; returned to their guests; and next day accompanied them to court, where Florentin was received by his father with every mark of affection. Diocletian, drowned in tears of joy, was himself unable to speak; and consequently did not remark the silence of the youth, who expressed also by his tears and embraces the sincerity of his filial duty; besides which, their interview was only momentary, as the empress, on hearing of Florentin's arrival, immediately requested his attendance in her own apartment.

Of the mental perfections of her son in law she had heard so much that her curiosity was completely satisfied, but of his person she knew nothing; and this produced, at first sight, so deep an impression on her mind, that not being in the habit of curbing her passions, she immediately ordered her attendants out of the room, and proceeded

without reserve to communicate to the astonished Florentin the feelings which he had awakened, and the facilities which her marriage with his father might afford for their gratification. Her eloquence on this topic was so rapid and abundant that it was long before she gave the prince an opportunity of making any reply, but at length she naturally began to expect an answer, and was not a little astonished at his invincible silence. She flattered herself with the hope that this might arise from mere bashfulness and timidity, and proceeded to try every mode of encouragement; but her silent companion recoiled from her touch with such signs of horror that she could not long doubt of his contempt and aversion.

Then the empress wex wroth;
She tare her hair and her cloth.
Her Kirtel, her pilche of ermine,
Her kercheifs of silk, her smock of line,
All together, with both fist,
She to-rent beneathen her breast.
With both honden her yellow hair
Out of the tresses she it tare;
And she to-scratched her visage,
And *gradde** "harow" with great rage.

* cried.

In hall was the emperour.

"Who hath thee done this dishonour?"

"*Bot* * this devil that here is?

"Had me 'near *y-honisht* † i-wis!"

She then proceeded to state that the marks of violence about her person were the effects of his brutal rage, and loudly demanded the instant death of the ravisher.

As the youth and beauty of the empress gave some degree of probability to this horrible accusation, and the supposed culprit continued obstinately silent, the indignant emperor immediately gave orders that his unnatural son should be stripped and scourged, and afterwards hanged: but no sooner were these orders made public, than the lords who were then in the palace interposed to prevent their execution, and obtained from the reluctant Diocletian a promise, that the heir of the empire should be exempted from this ignominious punishment until he should have been tried before an assembly of the nobles. The court was therefore summoned for the succeeding day; and the prince, in the mean time, was ordered into close confinement.

This delay was by no means pleasing to the empress. The dumb man might change his

* who but? † brought to shame, Fr.

mind and speak in his turn; and his asseverations were more likely than her own to be credited by his judges, amongst whom his rank and his virtues had procured him many partisans. It would save her much trouble if she could persuade the emperor to act from himself; and for this purpose, when he came to bed at night, she told him the story of

"THE PINNOTE-TREE AND ITS IMP."

THERE was once at Rome a burgess, who, having enriched himself by traffic, purchased a handsome house with a fair garden adjoining,

Full of apple-trees and of perry,
Fowles sung therin merry.
*Amidelward** that garden free,
So wox a *pinnote* † tree,
That had faire boughs and fruit,
There-under was all his *dedut* ‡.
He made there-under a green bench,
And drank there-under many a *skench* §.:
Certes, therein was all his playing,
In time of solace and his resting.

* in the middle of.

† "the name of a red-stocked and round-leafed vine." Cotgrave.

‡ pleasure. § draught.

As the whole sphere of the burgess's observation was confined within this single arbour, he could not fail of discovering a small *imp* (sucker) which was at length put out from the root. He watched this imp with daily attention; but as its growth was much slower than he wished, he called his gardener and inquired why the imp did not grow faster? The man replied, that being overshadowed by a large branch of the parent tree, it did not obtain its due share of light and moisture. The burgess now ordered the branch to be cut away; and the sucker having rapidly increased after this experiment, a second and a third branch which interfered with its progress were successively sacrificed to it, until its luxuriance and the abundance of its foliage formed a striking contrast to the naked and unsightly appearance of its once flourishing parent. At length the burgess became disgusted with his original favourite, and caused it to be cut down, lest the small quantity of nourishment which it still continued to derive from the soil should in future impoverish its rival. "Such, sir," said the empress "will shortly be your fate. You are the old tree, and Florentin is the imp, which, long fostered under your shade, now grows with luxuriance, and only wants room for more expansion. He has once set you at de-

fiance, and lives to glory in his crime. Vengeance, perhaps, is still in your power, but if deferred, the means of inflicting it will be lost, and you will be shoved from the throne to make room for the more powerful Florentin." Diocletian loved a story to his heart; and though, during its recital, incapable of discerning its application, was marvellously struck when this application was explained to him. He had been long accustomed to reign, and was fit for little else; so that being now induced to consider his son as a rival, he determined most firmly to order his immediate death; and flattered himself that the justice of the action would be applauded by all who should hear the story of the Pinnote-tree and of its Imp.

The hall was already filled with barons and with persons of all ranks, when the emperor took his seat, and repeated his orders of the preceding day. The prince was taken out of prison, led naked through the hall, and conveyed towards the place of execution amidst the universal murmurs of the senate and people; but the youth himself continued obstinately silent, and no one appeared to plead his cause, till the philosopher Bancillas, making his way through the assembly, and approaching the throne, began to remonstrate with the emperor on his injustice and cruelty. Diocletian was at this time very much out of humour,

and answered the polite salutation of the Wise Master "*Deu vous doint bon jour*" by imprecating all sorts of curses on his head and on those of his six companions, who, being selected to educate the heir of the empire, had taken from him the use of his tongue, and bestowed on him in return a most ungovernable propensity to rape and incest. Bancillas, in reply, asserted Florentin's innocence; earnestly conjured the emperor to disbelieve the testimony of a step-mother, and finally assured him, that should he sacrifice his son he would be tortured by unavailing remorse, as was the knight for the loss of his good grey-hound. At these words the emperor eagerly requested to hear the story; but the stubborn philosopher refused to relate one word until he should have obtained a day's respite for the prince, which being reluctantly granted, he proceeded with his narrative.

THE KNIGHT AND HIS GREY-HOUND.

SIRE, there was formerly celebrated in this city, on the day of the holy Trinity, a magnificent tournament; and the lists, which attracted from all quarters a crowd of noble competitors, were erected in a pleasant and spacious meadow at no great distance. In this meadow the knight, whose adventure I am about to relate, had an

old manor-house, surrounded on all sides by a river,

Of chambers, and of high hall,
Of old work, *for-crased* * all.

He had also a beautiful wife; an infant child whom he idolized; and a grey-hound whose sagacity and courage were unparalleled. The child was attended by three nurses, the first of whom was employed to suckle him, whilst the other two were ordered to relieve each other in watching him, whether sleeping or waking, with constant assiduity.

On the occasion of this tournament,

The knight was lopen on his steed,
And armed well in iron weed;
The shield about his neck, the spear in his hond,
And *burdised* † with the knightes of the lond.

The lady took her place among the beauties who were invited to behold the feats of arms; and as the manor-house was so near as to afford a tolerable view of the amusement, all the servants, and

* cracked, crazy.
† played or justed with.

even the three nurses were eager to gratify their curiosity, and the child was left in its cradle, close to the wall of the house, which, as we have seen, was cracked through in many places.

In one of these crevices was lodged a huge adder, which being disturbed by the unusual shouts of the servants, excited by the various exploits at the tournament, put out its head, and at length creeping from its hole advanced towards the cradle.

The grey-hound seeth the adder red,
Grislich, rough, strong, and *qued* *;
Anon he gan her assail,
And *hent* † her in his mouth sans fail.
The adder so the grey-hound stang,
And he feeled the bite so strang,
Anon he let the adder gon:
Upon the cradle she flew anon,
And was about the child to sting.
And the grey-hound came *yern flinging* ‡,
And hent the adder in strong *gear* §,
And flapped her all about his ear.
Between the adder and the grey-hound,
The cradle turned up so down on ground.

* wicked. † caught. ‡ quickly bounding.
§ manner.

Up so down, in her fighting,
That the child lay dwelling.
The staples it upheld *all quert* *,
That the child was nought y-hurt.
The adder so the grey-hound bot
By the side, God it wot,
He cried, and on the cradle leap,
And bled thereon a well great heap:
And when the smart was all y-gone,
To that adder he sterte anon,
And by the body he her hent,
And all to pieces her to-rent.
The grey-hound would not ceased be,
Tell that adder were torn *of three* †;
And all the place there about
Was well bloody withouten doubt.

The tournament being over, the spectators began to retire, and the nurses hastened to resume their charge; but they beheld the cradle overturned and covered with blood, and the grey-hound bleeding, and whining from the pain of his wounds. Without examining any further, they concluded that the dog was guilty, and rushing out of the house ran to meet their mistress, to

* tout court?—Fr.
† into three parts, i. e. all to pieces.

whom they impudently protested, that the grey-hound, in a fit of sudden ferocity, had, in spite of all their efforts, torn to pieces the charming infant.

The lady fell into a swoon, and on her recovery adopted at once the false report of her nurses, related it to the knight on his return, and swore, with torrents of tears, that unless he would instantly revenge her by the destruction of his favourite, she would, before his eyes, put an end to her own existence. The disconsolate father spoke not a word, but rushed into the hall; and whilst the faithful grey-hound feebly crawled to meet him and to lick his hand, clove the animal in two with his sword. He then approached the cradle to behold for the last time his murdered infant, and having turned up the clothes, saw with astonishment and delight the child in perfect health, and just waking from the slumbers which the preceding accident had not interrupted. By the side of the cradle lay the fragments of the serpent, and the whole fable by which he had been deceived was instantly explained. His conscience smote him. He would not stain his sword with the blood of the wretches through whose means he had murdered the deliverer of his child, but he vowed to expiate, by a penance which should only

terminate with his life, his own folly in listening to the counsels of a heedless and inconsiderate woman. He rushed into the woods; retired to a distant hermitage, and never more returned to the habitations of men. Such, sire, will be your remorse and repentance if you blindly determine on the destruction of your amiable son at the instigation of his false and malicious step-mother.

Diocletian, who generally provided himself with opinions by adopting those of the last speaker, now declared his adherence to the sentiments of Bancillas, and totally forgot his compassion for the misfortunes of the old pinnote-tree, in his tenderness for the good knight, whom he resembled in a warm affection for grey-hounds. But at length the night came, and with it came the reproaches of the empress; who taxed him with want of resolution, and with an extreme love of flattery, by which she assured him that he would be betrayed as the boar was by the herdsman. This allusion effectually awakened his curiosity, and she proceeded to tell him the story of

THE BOAR AND THE HERDSMAN.

To the westward of this city is a spacious forest, formally the abode of a boar, who, from his amazing size and supposed ferocity, was the terror

of the whole neighbourhood. In the same forest lived a herdsman who tended a large herd of cattle; but as they usually pastured in the open parts of the wood, he never approached the haunts of this terrible animal. But it happened one day that a part of his herd had strayed to some distance, and it became necessary that he should follow them. In the course of his search he discovered a hawthorn tree, the fruit of which was then ripe, and seeing great quantities of it on the ground, could not refrain from stopping to fill his pockets. He did so, and was going to depart when he discovered the boar who came straight up to the same tree, under which he had for many preceding days found a plentiful repast. The poor herdsman was half dead with fear; but to fly was hopeless, and his only resource was to climb up into the tree, where he hoped to remain undiscovered. Unluckily the boar, after devouring the scanty gleanings which had been left under the tree, happened to scent the ample stores contained in the man's pockets, and being disappointed in his attempts to reach the precious magazine, became furious with rage, foamed at the mouth, and whetting his tusks against the roots of the tree, shook it with such violence that the poor herdsman considered his destruction as inevitable. In this extremity

he fortunately bethought himself of emptying his pockets; and at the same time gathering all the haws within his reach, showered them down so profusely that the boar was satisfied, and after a plentiful dinner appeared disposed to take his rest. The artful herdsman now lowered himself so far as to reach with his fingers the back of the animal, which he began to scratch with such dexterity that the boar, who was hitherto unaccustomed to such luxury, closed his eyes, and abandoned himself to the most delicious slumbers; at which instant the herdsman drawing a long knife, with which he was provided, suddenly pierced him to the heart. Such, sir emperor, are the artifices of your flatterers; they please and tickle your ears with their praises, but it is that they may lull you to sleep and stab you with more security.

The emperor not choosing to die like a boar, now determined as usual to put his son to death, but was diverted from his purpose by the Wise Master Ancilles, who having obtained a day's respite for the prince, proceeded to relate the following story of

HIPPOCRATES AND HIS NEPHEW.

Your majesty knows that Hippocrates, "The Wise Clerk," was formerly professor of medicine

in this city. He had with him a nephew whom he wished to instruct in his art, and to whom he communicated all his secrets; but after a time, the uncommon sagacity of the pupil began to awaken the jealousy and envy of the preceptor, who had meant to form an assistant in his practice, not a rival of his reputation. The irritation of temper produced in the sage by these unworthy sentiments preyed on his health and occasioned a dangerous disease, during the height of which he received a message from the king of Hungary requesting his attendance on the heir of that kingdom, who was supposed to be at the point of death. Hippocrates, though much against his will, was now compelled to employ his nephew, though he foresaw that the fame of the young man, if successful, would be elevated very nearly to the level of his own. The young practitioner immediately departed for Hungary,

And when he com to that lond,
The king took him by the hond,
And led him to his sick child;
"Now Christ of heaven be us mild!"
The young man *seigh** the childe's pain,
And *tasted*† his sinew and his vein,

* saw. † felt; taster, tâter, Fr.

He taketh an urinal for to seen;
He ne segh nought of the king, but of the queen:
And of the child, God it wote,
He segh it was a misbegote.
He gan the levedi aside draw, &c.

And closely questioned her concerning the father of the invalid, who, he was positively certain, was by no means related to the king of Hungary. The queen, astonished at this unexpected question, began by treating it with levity, and when he persisted, threatened him with punishment for his insolence; but on his assuring her that he was unable to cure her child without the disclosure of this important secret, and that she might rest assured of his inviolable fidelity, she looked on him with astonishment, burst into tears, and confessed that a certain earl of Navarre, who had sojourned for some time at her husband's court, and who was very well made and well dressed, had pleased her so much that "*par gret druerie*" she sometimes indulged him with liberties which had apparently led to the birth of her dear child.

The young physician now informed her that the boy, being illegitimate, would require "contrarious drink, contrarious meat;" that he must be fed on "beeves' flesh, and drink the broth," and this

diet being plentifully administered to the patient, he rapidly recovered; and the young leech was dismissed with the most magnificent presents, and with the benedictions of the queen and of her husband.

Hippocrates, on his nephew's return, inquired into all that had passed;

He asked gif that the child was sound;
"Yea, sire," he said, "by Saint Simound."
He asked, "What was his medicine?"
"Beef and broth good *a fine**."
"What then, was he an *avetrol* †?"
"Thou sayest sooth, sir, by my poll!"
Quath Ypocras, "by the God's doom,
"Thou art become all too wise a groom!"
There he thought, against reasoun,
To do him strong treasoun.

The accomplishment of the crime soon followed. One day that they were walking in their garden, and discoursing on the virtues of the plants cultivated in it, Hippocrates pointed out to his nephew a small herb which he desired him to gather, and, whilst the youth stooped for that purpose, drew out

* in fine; afin, enfin, Fr.

† avoitrel, diminutive of avoistre, a bastard.—O. Fr.

a dagger and stabbed him. He then buried the body on the spot, returned into the house, and enjoyed the malignant pleasure of burning the books to which the young man was indebted for his wonderful advancement in science. But the vengeance of Heaven closely pursued him. He was seized with a *meneson* (dysentery), a disease in the cure of which his nephew was always particularly successful, and being unable to arrest its progress, soon foresaw that it would prove fatal. He then convoked all his friends, exhibited before them some striking proofs of his art, and after warning them of the small extent of all human skill, made a full disclosure of the crime to which he justly fell a sacrifice. His death was attended by excruciating pains, which were heightened by remorse, and he expired vainly calling on his murdered nephew for assistance and relief.

Diocletian was much affected by this tragical story; but the empress was prepared to counteract the impression which it had left by relating the tale of

THE FATHER MURDERED BY HIS SON.

Octavian, emperor of Rome, surpassed in wealth the richest of his predecessors. It was he who built the celebrated tower called the Crescent,

in which he locked up his treasures, and appointed for the protection of his hoard a minister whose vigilance and avarice were equally proverbial. He had also another minister, who was a perfect contrast to the former, being remarkable for his profusion; so that having dissipated his whole fortune he found himself without resource, and at last formed the desperate resolution of robbing the imperial treasury. To execute such a design without assistance was nearly impossible, and to impart it to a common accomplice was too hazardous; he therefore chose his own son: and, knowing where the money was deposited, repaired by night to the tower, made a breach in the wall, entered, and carried off as much gold as they were able to transport to his habitation. With this supply he was enabled for some time longer to pursue his former course of extravagance; but having at length exhausted his coffers, he determined to attempt the repetition of an enterprise in which he had been once successful. The crafty treasurer, however, had not slumbered over his charge. A few hours only had elapsed after the first robbery, before he perceived that part of the treasure had been purloined, and discovered the part of the wall through which the thieves had entered, and which on their departure they had again repaired

so carefully as to leave no marks of injury which could attract the attention of a common observer. Judging from this circumstance that they would probably return, he caused a pit to be dug immediately under the place, and filled it with pitch and birdlime, in the hopes of entrapping the robber, who, in fact, found himself instantly entangled so effectually as to preclude all hopes of deliverance. In this terrible situation he called to his son, warned him to avoid the danger; explained to him the impossibility of his escape, and the fatal consequences which must result to his whole family from the discovery of his guilt; and finally conjured him to strike off his head, as there remained no other means of escaping detection. The young man hesitated for some time, but the dawn approached; the father importunately persisted in the same request: the hope of preserving himself and his relations from a danger otherwise inevitable at length prevailed, and having cut off the head he precipitately ran off with it towards his habitation.

Ac he ne wist, for none need,
Where he might it best *ihede* *:

* hide.

But, als he came by a *gong* *,
Amid the pit he it flung;
And went home, and made wo,
His brethren and his sistren also.

In the mean time the treasurer, who never failed to visit his trap, was not less surprised than mortified at finding in it a headless trunk, from which it was impossible to draw any indication of the guilty person. He, however, had recourse to an expedient which did honour to his sagacity. He gave orders that the body should be slowly drawn by the feet through all the streets of Rome; that its conductors should be constantly on the watch; and that if this ceremony should excite in any house near which they passed an appearance of unusual sorrow, they should seize and bring before him those persons, who would probably be the near relations of the deceased. The stratagem was on the point of succeeding, and the daughters of the dead man were betrayed by the sight of his body into a sudden burst of lamentation, which attracted the attention of the officers; but the brother at the same moment drawing his sword, pierced himself in the thigh, and exhibiting

* a privy.—Bailey's Dict.

his wound, convinced them that this accident had occasioned the screams which had awakened their suspicions. From this tale the empress inferred that, as the young man had thrown his father's head into a gong, instead of burying it with proper respect, the wicked Florentin would gladly treat his majesty with similar contempt; and this inference, though perhaps not strictly legitimate, having satisfied Diocletian, he rose with the determination of ordering his son's execution, from which he was again diverted by the philosopher Lentilion, who related to him the story of

THE HUSBAND OUT OF DOORS.

THERE lived formerly in this town a burgess, who, being disposed to marry, was too proud to accept an alliance with any of his neighbours, and proposed to select for his wife some young lady who might ennoble his blood, and by her beauty and accomplishments excite the envy of all his acquaintance. Such a mate he had, at length, the good fortune to discover; and brought home a young damsel of high birth, some beauty, much affectation, and more effrontery. The haughty bride, though she entertained a thorough contempt for her husband, was in some measure reconciled to her new situation by the company of

her former lover, who condescended to consider the house of the hospitable burgess as his own, and, without the name of a husband, to perform all a husband's duties.

There was at this time a law in Rome that any person, of whatever rank or sex, who should be found out of the house after the sound of curfew, should be confined in prison till the morning, and then publicly driven through the streets as a vagrant. This law suggested to the husband a project for correcting the libertine disposition of his wife. Having perceived that she was in the habit of stealing away from his side when he was plunged in his first sleep, and reasonably supposing that she did not pass the time of her absence in total solitude,

O night, he him as drunk made,
And yede to bed blithe and glad,
And lay still, as he slept soon:
She stale away, *mididon* *,
And went to her *lutely* †;
And he it aparceived sikerly,
And went him out, and segh, and heard,
Altogether how she mis-fared.

* secretly? *mithene*, absconditus.—Sax.?
† compaſſion, lover.—Chaucer.

And went him in out of the street,
And shut the door swithe sket;
And spake out at window,
And said, " Dame, God give thee *how**;
" This thou ne might forsake for none need;
" Ich have i-nome thee in this dede
" With thy lechour: with him thou go!
" Of thee ne keep I never mo."

The humbled wife now expressed the most sincere penitence; prayed to be admitted into the house; urged the public shame which both must incur if she were found in the streets at that hour; and at length, counterfeiting the extremity of despair, threatened to drown herself in the well as the only means of preserving her reputation. She then took up a large stone, threw it violently into the water, uttered a dreadful scream, and then silently retreated behind the door. The husband made no reply to her exclamations but that, whether she chose to hang or drown herself was to him a matter of extreme indifference; but he was startled by the dashing of the water, and by the subsequent silence. He continued to listen at the window; repeatedly addressed his wife; received no answer; repented him of his severity; rushed down stairs;

* care.

and running to the well, was not a little surprised at hearing the door shut behind him with considerable noise, and at being assailed by a torrent of invectives from the window which he had just quitted. It was now his turn to petition. The sound of the curfew struck upon his ear; he heard the horses of the guards; he implored for admittance, but the wife was deaf to his intreaties. Even the guards, who knew the innocent character of the man, interceded for him in vain.

She answered as malicious—
" He cometh now from the hore house,
" Thus he is woned me to serve,
" An evil death mot he *sterve* * :
" Ich have y-hid his shame ere this ;
" I ne will never more y-wis."
Corfour bell no longer rong ;
The burgess was led forth with wrong.
What helpeth it longer tale ?
That night he sat *well sore akale* †,
And his wife lay warm a bed,
And solace of her leman *fredde* ‡ .
A morrow the burgess was forth i-sette,
And his honden beforn him *knet* § ;

* die. † grievously cool.
‡ felt. Sax. fredan, sentire. § tied.

And through the town he was y-lad,
Lothlich driven, and *begrad**
As a thief. This mischance
Guiltless he suffered and this penance.

" Sire, couth this woman of guile ?"
" Ya, she was a traitour vile,
" And well worse than a hound : "
" Sire, mo swich there beth y-found,
" And thyself hath one swich ! " &c.

The emperor is unable to controvert the remarks of Lentilion; but at night once more changes his mind on hearing from the empress the story " of a King of Apulia and of his Steward." This is too gross, and much too dull for insertion; but it produces the usual effect on Diocletian, which is afterwards removed by the Wise Master Malquedras, who relates the story of

THE OLD WISE MAN AND HIS WIFE.

THERE was formerly in this city an old man who, throughout his whole life, had been cited as an example of prudence. He had amassed an ample fortune, which he expended in rational amusements; and having successively lost two

* hooted at.

wives whom he had married in the prime of life, thought a state of widowhood the best suited to his declining age and growing infirmities. But his friends thought otherwise; and a prudent man is often obliged, for the sake of tranquillity, to follow the advice of his friends in preference to his own wishes. They recommended to him a young and beautiful girl, who had been educated with the greatest care by an attentive mother, and who therefore seemed very unlikely to excite in him that jealous uneasiness to which husbands of a certain age are supposed to be very generally addicted. He married; and found in marriage as much happiness as he expected.

But it was otherwise with the young lady. As neither her mother nor her confessor had thought it necessary, before her marriage, to explain to her very minutely the change of situation which she was about to undergo, she had naturally trusted to her own imagination for a picture of futurity; and this picture of conjugal delight was so far from resembling what she experienced, that she had some difficulty in concealing, even from her husband, the excess of her disappointment. After revolving this matter for some time in her thoughts, she concluded that her husband did not love her; and that, as she felt no great disposition

to love him; she could not do better than to search for a third person, who might more nearly sympathize with her feelings. With this notable resolution she was so well satisfied that she hastened to impart it to her mother, whom she found at church, and to whom she communicated a long string of domestic anecdotes, concluding with

" Ich mote have some other love."
" Nay, daughter, for God above!
" Old men ben *fell** and *queint*†,
" And wicked *wrenches*‡ can *ateinte*§:
" Misdo nought, daughter, but do by *rede*¶.

The old lady then proposed the following expedient as a trial of the old man's disposition. " Your husband," said she, " has in his garden a favourite tree which he rarely fails to visit. Take advantage of his first absence from home; order this tree to be cut down and brought in logs to your fire; and when he sh ll ask your reason for committing this outrage, simply answer, that you did it for the purpose of communicating some warmth to his cold bones." " It shall be done," said the daughter; and she kept her word. The

* cruel. † cunning. ‡ stratagems.—Sax.
§ give a colouring to; atincter.—O. Fr. ¶ advice.

old man expressed some discontent at the exploit, and at the excuse, but he was too prudent to say much; and his wife, who was only anxious to witness the ultimate success of her experiment, paid little attention to his present feelings.

She waited till the enchanted fuel was nearly expended; when perceiving that the old man's blood was still as tranquil as if he had warmed himself by the commonest tree in the forest, she again repaired to her mother, who again dissuaded her from resorting to extremities, and counselled her to make this second trial. "Your husband has a favourite grey-hound bitch, who is often in the habit of caressing you; feign yourself out of humour with her and murder her before his face. It will be strange indeed if this do not give you a perfect insight into his temper!" "You shall be obeyed."

Was it nought long afterward,
The young levedi and her lord
Sat, on even, by the fire;
Beforen hem stood her squire.
She had on a *pilche** of price,
And a *chaisel*† theron, y-wis;

* a furred dress.—Sax. toga pellicea.—Sibbald's gloss.

† an upper garment which covered the whole body. Vide Du Cange in voce *casula*.

The bitch lay in her *barm* *:
She played, and it did her harm.
She drew a knife and her smot;
The bitch died, God it wot,
And pilche and chaisel all be-bled;
The lord rose, and yede to bed.
For all her *wrenche* †, and all her gin,
The more love she might nought win.

In relating to her mother the ill success of this second experiment, she expatiated so strongly on the necessity of resorting to her own expedient, that the good old lady had the curiosity to inquire whether any knight or squire had yet engaged her affections. She answered in the negative; and added, that being determined to secure her reputation, she had thoughts of bestowing her love on some young priest, who would of course be careful to keep her secret. The mother was now more at ease, and enjoined her to make one more trial, which, she assured her, would infallibly procure her happiness by putting an end to the present apathy of her husband. "Your lord," said she, has invited all his friends to an entertainment which is to take place in a few days. You must, on that occasion, hang a bunch of keys at your

* lap. † contrivance.

girdle, and having taken your seat at the upper end of the table, contrive to entangle these keys in the table-cloth. Then, upon some trifling pretext, rise suddenly; by which means the cups and dishes will be overset, and the whole company thrown into confusion." All this was punctually executed by the obedient daughter; who, after "serving the guests with bread and ale," took her seat by her husband, and soon after sprang up from table with such dexterous aukwardness that the whole hall was instantly overspread with the ruins of the entertainment. This was her last triumph.

On the following morning she was much surprised at beholding in her apartment a large fire, a great chair covered with cloths, a table supporting a number of basins, and a "*good barber*" who, with an air of medical importance, was expecting her arrival. Her husband, addressing her with his usual mildness, observed that she had in her veins a quantity of peccant blood which it would be necessary to remove, and assured her that after the operation she would immediately regain the natural gentleness of her disposition. She trembled, turned pale, declared that she could not bear the sight of blood, protested that bleeding would kill her on the spot, struggled, screamed, but to no purpose: the inflexible barber forcibly

placed her in the chair, bared her right arm, opened the vein, applauded his own dexterity, took away two porringers of blood, and, having tied up the wound, proceeded to repeat the operation on the other arm. Fresh screams, expostulations, and struggles on the part of the lady were unable to disturb the tranquil obstinacy of the barber. A third measure of blood was drawn off: the patient became faint and giddy; and being put to bed, began to believe that her last hour was now really approaching. Her husband, indeed, had encouraged her to hope that she might yet do well; but as he had at the same time informed her that the next transgression would compel him to double the discipline, she sent in the utmost haste for her mother, to whom she faintly cried out that her lord had killed her—

" For mine three *unwrest** deed,
" Three dishful of blood he let me bleed,
" That I ne may live, by Godis ore!"
" Daughter, listeth thee love more?"
" Nay, mother; by God all might,
" I n'ill neither love clerk ne knight."
" No, daughter! I said full well,
" That old men beth queynt and fell.

* contumacious?

"They con more *qued** *lythenche* †
"Than thou canst do with any wrenche:
"Hold thee to thine husbound,
"And thou shalt have *all the mound* ‡!"

To this story the artful empress opposed that of

CRESSUS THE RICH MAN.

Sir, your majesty has doubtless heard of Virgil the famous enchanter. He placed, by his skill in necromancy, in the midst of the Forum a fire which it was impossible to extinguish, and at which the poor of Rome were accustomed to warm themselves and to cook their dinners. On a pedestal, near the fire, stood a brazen statue, with a cross-bow bent, and a quarrel or large arrow on the string; and on the forehead of the statue was an inscription purporting,

"Gif me smiteth any man,
"I schete him anon ogan."

A certain Lombard, taking offence at this inscription, asked permission of the Romans to strike the statue, and they having encouraged him to try

* evil, mischief. † think of, contrive.
‡ all the world; i. e. all your wishes shall be gratified.

the adventure, the figure punished their folly by shooting his quarrel into the midst of the fire, which from that moment disappeared. Thus was lost one of Virgil's benefactions to this city; but he had enriched it with other marvels, the destruction of which is the immediate object of my story.

On the eastern gate of the city he placed a figure of brass, having in his hand a golden ball: on the western gate stood another man of brass exactly similar, except that he was empty-handed; and in the centre of Rome, on the top of an elevated stage, was fixed a third statue, holding in its hand an enchanted mirror, which reflected an exact picture of all that was passing in Italy within seven days' journey of the city. Whenever any of the neighbouring potentates prepared to attack the Romans, the two first-mentioned statues began to play at ball, the one throwing and the other catching it; and this excited the attention of the citizens, who on inspecting the magical mirror, immediately saw the quarter from which they were menaced, and were thus enabled to anticipate the designs of their enemies.

The king of Apulia, aware of these obstacles to his project of attacking the city, consulted all the cunning men whom he could find, and at

length found two *clerks* in Rome itself, who, on his promise of an immense reward, undertook to contrive the destruction of the statues. They obtained from the king two *forcers* (chests) filled with gold, which they secretly conveyed into Rome, and buried at night under the two statues at the gates. On the following day they repaired to the palace, and addressing the emperor, informed him that there was a vast treasure concealed under ground within the walls, which they would undertake to discover upon his assurance that they should receive half the profits; but that they must first go to sleep, because it was only in a dream that they expected to learn the exact spot where the gold was hidden. The emperor acceded to the conditions, and on the next day the elder brother pointed out the statue near the eastern gate, where, on digging, the forcer was found and conveyed in great state to the imperial treasury. The younger brother was a no less able dreamer; and the emperor having made an excavation under the statue at the western gate, was rewarded by a second chest of gold still richer than the first. Cressus was now full of confidence in his dreamers, whom he exhorted to persevere; but when they promised him an exhaustless mine of wealth by digging under the statue with the mirror, his

avarice was combated by his fears, and he refused to permit the operation till they assured him that all Virgil's treasures were concealed there, and that they could so prop up the ground that all might be removed without danger to the statue. But having completed their excavation, and promised the emperor for the morrow the completion of his utmost expectations, they stole out in the night, kindled a fire under the wooden supports of their mine, and, having witnessed the success of their contrivance, made their escape into Apulia. The populace of Rome now rushed in crowds to the palace, seized the emperor, bound him on a table, and having melted a quantity of gold, poured it into his mouth, eyes, and ears,

And said, "Sire, for golde's love,
"Thou hast made thrall that was above;
"Now art thou full, now make thee *hait* *;
"Now wilt thou never more *coveit* †!"

The foregoing tale, it is true, does not possess much intrinsic merit, but it was about an emperor who was duped by cunning men; its catastrophe was dreadful, and it frightened Diocletian almost out of his wits; so that it required all the talents

* happy, healthy. O. Fr. † covet.

of the learned astrologer Caton to restore him to his senses, which he effected by telling him the story of

THE MAGPIE.

Now everich man that loveth his hale
Listen wel Catoun's tale.

A burgess was in Rome town,
A rich man, of great renoun;
Marchaúnt he was, of great *aveir**,
And had a wife was *queint* † and fair;
But she was fickle under her lok,
And had a part of Eve's smock:
And many ben yet of her kin,
That ben all be-lapped therin.

The burgess had a pie in his hall,
That couth tellen tales all
Apertlich ‡ in French language;
And heng in a fair cage,
And seeth lemmans comen and gon,
And telleth her loverd soon anon;
And, for that the pie had y-said,
The wife was oft evil apaid.
And the burgess loved his pie,
For he wist he couth nought lie.

* wealth.—Fr. † neat; cointe.—Fr. ‡ openly, plainly.—Fr.

So it befell upon a day,
The burgess from home took his way,
And went about his marchandise:
The wife watched anon her prise,
And sent her *copenere** for;
And when he com to the hall door,
He ne durst nought in hie,
For the *wreying* † of the pie.
The wife him by the honde hent,
And into chamber anon they went.

The pie began to *grede* ‡ anon,—
" Ya, now my loverd is out y-gone,
" Thou comest hither for no good;
" I shall thee wraie, by the rood!"
The wife thought y-schent she was;
A wrenche she thought *nathelas* §;
And cleped a maid to make her bed.
And after, by *her bother rede* ||,
A ladder they set the hall to,
And undid a tile or two;
Over the pie they gan handle
A *clear* ¶ basin, and a candle;
A pot full of water clear
They shed upon the pie's *swere***.

* lover.—Sax. † discovering, betraying. ‡ cry.
§ nevertheless. || by their joint advice.
¶ polished, so as to reflect the light. ** neck.

With bason beating, and candle light,
They bobbed the pie by night,
And water on him gan *schenche* * :
This was one of woman's wrenche.

Tho the day dawen gan,
Away stale the young man.
Men unlock door and windòw ;
The pie her shook with mochel *how.* †,
For she was fain that it was day :
The copener was went his way ;—
The good burgess was home y-come ;
Into the hall the way he nome.
The pie said, " By God Almight!
" The copener was here to-night,
" And hath y-done thee mochel shame ;
" And made an hore of our dame !
" And yet it hath been, to night,
" Great rain, and thunder bright ;
" Sithen ich was brid in my nest,
" I ne had never so evil rest."

The wife hath the tale y-heard,
And thoughte well to ben *amered* ‡ ;
And saide, " Sire, thou hast outrage
" To 'lieve a pie in a cage :

* the same as skenke, to pour out.—Sax. † care.
‡ examined, proved innocent ; *amerian.*—Sax.

" To night was the weather clear,
" And the firmament well fair;
" And she saith it hath been thonder:
" She hath *i-lowe* * many a wonder;
" But ich be awreke of her swithe,
" Ne shall I never ben woman blithe!"
The good man asked his neighbours
Of that night, and of the hours;
And they said, that all that night
Was the weather clear and bright.
The burgeis said, " the pie
" Ne shold him never more lie;"
Na more wordes he there spake,
But, all so swithe, his neck to-brake.
And when he saw his pie dead,
For sorrow couth he no rede:
He saw her [†] and her cage,
He *thoughte of* ‡ guile and outrage.
He went him out, the ladder he *segth* §,
And up to the hall roof he *stegth* ||.
The pot with the water he found;
(That he brake with his hond;)
And many other trecherie
That was i-don to his pie.

* lied. [†] an erasure in the MS. ‡ suspected.
§ seeth. || mounteth. Sax. stigan.

He went him down, withouten oth,
In his heart grim and wroth;
And with a good staff, full skét,
His wife oute door he bet;
And bade her go, that ilke day,
An alder-twenty-devil way * !
" Lo ! Sire," he said, " for a fool's rede,
" The pie, that said sooth, was dead;
" Had he taken good conseil,
" His pie had ben whole and hale:
" And also fareth thine emprice,
" Thorough her reason, *shrewd* and *nice* †,
" She goeth about, day and night,
" Thy son to death for to dight, &c."

To this tale the empress opposed that of

HEROWDES AND MERLIN.

HEROWDES, emperor of Rome, had in his council seven sages, to whom, whilst he followed his amusements, he intrusted the whole management of the empire; and these sages employed the power thus confided to them as a means of gratifying their avarice. Though their authority did not enable them to levy a tax on his subjects, they

* literally, on the way of all the twenty devils.
† wicked and foolish.

derived from the credulity of the Romans a considerable revenue; having enacted, that whoever should wish to have an interpretation of his dream must bring them a *besaunt* * as a reward: and as the Romans were great dreamers, this contribution was nearly equal to the whole imperial revenue. But the emperor was punished by Heaven for his culpable deference to his ministers. One day, that he was preparing to go out on a hunting-party, and was passing under one of the gates of the city, he was suddenly struck blind. The wise men were immediately summoned, and, being interrogated why the emperor could not see, confessed that they were unprepared with an answer, and requested a fortnight's delay, during which they meant to consult their books, and hoped to discover the cause and the means of remedying this unexpected calamity. But their books were consulted to no purpose; the emperor, who whilst he had his sight never thought fit to use it, was very impatient for its recovery, and the sages were almost in despair, when an old man advised them to consult the celebrated

* a coin of gold, formerly used at Byzantium, valued by Joinville at ten sous; and consequently worth rather more than as many livres of the present day.

Merlin, the child who was born without the intervention of a father.

Two of the wise masters, being deputed by the rest, brought this wonderful child * to Rome, and introduced him to Herowdes, to whom he related that, at some depth in the earth, but directly under his majesty's bed, was a great cauldron boiling with seven large bubbles, and that so long as the said cauldron should continue to boil, and the bubbles remain unbroken, he never would recover his sight. The emperor, a good deal surprised at this intelligence, employed his miners to search for the cauldron, which was readily found; and which, without any apparent excitement, continued to boil, and to exhibit exactly seven great bubbles. He then begged to know how this ebullition could be arrested; but Merlin replied, that this important secret could only be discovered to his imperial ears, and that his most confidential ministers must leave the room. This being complied with, Merlin proceeded to state that the wickedness of the wise men, who caused themselves to be paid a besaunt for every dream

* The mode in which Merlin was discovered is exactly copied from his romance, and therefore omitted in this abstract.

which they interpreted for his subjects, had provoked the indignation of Heaven, and that his majesty had therefore been visited by this severe misfortune, for the termination of which nothing more would be necessary than to strike off the heads of his seven ministers. Herowdes, rejoiced to find that his cure could be so cheaply obtained, caused his first minister to be beheaded, and had the satisfaction to hear that the corresponding bubble had disappeared: the other executions then followed in succession with a similar effect, and Herowdes became as clear-sighted as before his accident.

To remove the impression left by this tale on the mind of Diocletian was the object of the sixth master, whose name is not mentioned, but who proceeded to tell the story of

THE WIDOW WHO WAS COMFORTED.

THERE was a knight in this country, "*a riche sherreve*", (count), who married a young and beautiful wife, the object of his tenderest affection. Such was the happiness of this young couple, that the day and night appeared too short for their endearments, and each moment of accidental separation was considered by both as a serious misfortune. One day, whilst they were exami-

ning together a new knife, which had been bestowed on the lady as a bridal present, it slipped from the hands of her husband and slightly wounded her. The accident was followed by no bad consequence; but the unhappy knight was seized with such horror at the sight of her blood that he suddenly died.

He did great folie, certe,
Or too tender was his heart.

Unluckily grief is not, in all constitutions, a mortal disease; and the lovely cause of his death found herself unable to shake off, with the same expedition, the burthen of existence. Yet she trusted that she should not long survive him; and, unwilling to tear herself from his remains, ordered a small lodge to be built in the church-yard over the intended place of his grave, and took possession of this sad habitation on the day of his interment. Her friends vainly interposed,

And saiden, "Dame, gent and free,
"Of thy self have pité;
"For thou art fair and young sans fail,
"And may'st the world mochel avail:
"Some knight thou wed of noblay,
"And have with him much to play;

" Good children beget and fair:
" Gentil dame débonaire,
" Let away thy mourning,
" And take thee to some comforting!"
—" That will I do for no weal;
" Ac die I will on his buriale!"

As they perceived that the torrent of her grief only swelled the more by indiscreet opposition, they now satisfied themselves with providing, in silence, every accommodation that could be afforded in the hovel which she thought fit to occupy; and particularly took the precaution of making an excellent fire, to secure her from the baneful effects of the damp, and left a supply of fuel sufficient to last till the next morning.

It happened that on this very day three thieves who had been condemned to death were executed within a short distance of the church-yard.

The three thieves weren knights,
That were i-honged, anon rights;
For they had the countrè anoyed,
And with robbery destroyed,
Anhonged they were all three.
A knight of the countrè held his fee,

For to *loke* * the three knightes
Upon the gallows three nightes.
He com to the gallows, armed wele,
Both in iron and in steel,
For to make, the first night, ward.
The weather was cold and froward;
He was for-cold, and looked about,
And was 'ware, withouten doubt,
Of the fire in the *church-hawe* †,
And thither-ward he gan to draw,
For to have some warming;
And found the levedi *doel* ‡ making,
And *bade* § she should let him in.
She said she *n'old* ||, by Saint Johain.
"A! yes," he said, "*leve* ¶ dame,
"I n'ill thee do harm ne shame."
He swore as he was gentil knight;
She let him in anon right.
He sat and warmed him by the fer;
He beheld the lady's cheer,
And segh swich semblant she made;
And said, "Dame, thou art *agade* **,
"That thou moanest for the dead,
"That may thee do nother good ne qued!

* watch. † the church-yard. ‡ sorrow. § prayed.
|| ne would; would not. ¶ dear. ** distracted.

" Comfort thyself, pluck up thine heart;
" Such mourning then will thee smart.
" 'Of this mourning thou hast unright;
" Thou shouldest love some gentil knight
" That to thee might do some solas;"
And she said, " Allas! allas!"——

At this time the knight began to reflect that, during his absence, the dead bodies committed to his charge might possibly be purloined; he therefore mounted his horse and rode to the gallows. But he arrived too late, for one of them was already carried off. It was vain to lament his own effeminacy, which had induced him to desert his post in search of a good fire, or to imprecate curses on the desperate hardihood of those who had profited by his negligence. The mischief was done; and his own invention suggested no means of repairing it. But he had some confidence in the resources of female cunning; and having returned to the lodge and communicated his distress to the beautiful mourner, was completely encouraged by the unexpected confidence of her reply.

She said, " Sir, ich will help thee,
" So that thou wilt spouse me."

" Yes, dame," he said, " preciouse!
" Gif thou me help, ich will thee spouse."
She let her sorrow away gon,
And said, " Help, leman, anon,
" Help delve up my lord that was,
" He shall us helpen in this cas;
" And hong we him *in his entaile** !"
Her rede was done sans faille:
It ne may nought ben *for-hole* †,
They bare him forth for him was stole.
Then said the knight to the levedi,
" Who may this knight *hongi* ‡ ?
" I thee say, by heaven 'king,
" I n'old him honge for no thing;
" For gif ich had i-honged a knight,
" I shold be coward y-cleped with right."
" Sir," she said, " Ich will, full *faw* §,
" High him hongen and up-drawe !"
The levedi did, in *wode gear* ||,
A rope about her lordis swere,
And drew him up, and hung him fast:
The knight of her deeds was aghast,
And said, " Dame, by *God mound* ¶,
" The stolen knight had a wound

* as his successor? † concealed.

‡ hang; i, y, and e are used indifferently to express the infinitive. § glad. || in furious manner. ¶ God's world.

" In his heved, that was *be-knoe* *,
" Whereby him knew high and low;
" And, but thy loverd swich one have,
" I thee say, so God me save,
" Soon, within little while,
" *Worth* † i-parceived our guile."
" Sir," she said, " take thy swerd,
" And in the heved smite my loverd;
" Then shall it ben none understonding,
" But it was he that there ere *hing* ‡."
" Nay, dame, for moche ne for *lite* §,
" The dead knight would I nought smite!"
" No, Sire?" she said, " thy swerd me reach,
" And ich him shall, with my hond, teach
" *How Godis grame came to town* ||,
" Right a midelward his crown."
The lady took and smote with main
All a midelward the brain:
Then the knight well understood
That false and fickle was her blood;
And said, " Yet unlike he beth;
" Broken were his fore teeth."
" Sir," she said, " smite hem out."
" Nay, dame," he said, " withouten doubt."

* known. † will be. ‡ hung.
§ little. || I do not understand this.

" Then will ich," she said; and took a stone,
And smote hem out everich one.
When this deed was i-do,
The levedi said the knight to,
" Sire, now ich have won thy love!"
" Nay, dame," he said, " by God above,
" For gold ne silver, lond ne house,
" Thy false bodi ne would I spouse;
" For all so wouldest thou serve me,
" As thou hast done thy loverd so free:
" Thou hast i-taught me a new *ran* *,
" That I shall never 'lieve woman;
" For, tho they make semblant fairest,
" They will beguile you *alderformest* †!"

To this tale the empress opposed a story no less dull than absurd. Rome, it seems, was once besieged by seven Saracen kings, and the emperor was advised to confide its defence to seven wise men; one of whom, by name Genus (Janus), devised a stratagem for the purpose of frightening away the enemy. He caused to be made a black garment, covered with black squirrel-tails, and a vizor with two faces, the most frightful that could be imagined ‡, above which he adjusted a

* lesson? † all the foremost, first of all.

‡ Here ends the Auchinleck MS.; the remainder is from the Cotton MS., where it occupies about 1250 lines.

mirror, intended to reflect the sun's rays. In this fanciful dress he mounted to the top of one of the towers; gesticulated with great violence, screamed as loudly as he could; and, dazzling the eyes of the enemy with his mirror, impressed upon them the opinion that he was either an angel of light, or a devil of very high rank; so that, both characters being considered as equally invincible, the Saracens raised the siege, ran off, and during their flight were slaughtered in great numbers by the Christians. The Roman citizens rewarded the ingenuity of Genus by placing him on the imperial throne, after deposing their former emperor. The empress, as usual, threatens Diocletian with similar degradation; the foolish monarch again orders the prince's execution, and again recalls his order at the intercession of the seventh wise master, named Maxentius, who prophesies that on the following day Florentin will recover his speech and fully exculpate himself; and in the mean time entertains his majesty with the tale of

THE TWO DREAMS.

THERE was formerly a knight in Hungary distinguished by his prowess, but still more distinguished by his talents and ingenuity, in

which he equalled and even surpassed the most learned clerks of his time. One night he beheld in a dream a lady of astonishing beauty, of whom he became suddenly enamoured; and when he waked in the morning he found it impossible to erase the impression made by the charms of this visionary mistress. Her height, her air, her complexion, the colour of her hair, and even the form and proportion of all her features were so exactly painted on his memory, that he felt sure of recognising her as easily as an old acquaintance; and, having nothing better to do, departed without loss of time on this singular quest, in which he flattered himself with the hopes of success, although he had no clue to direct him, and was no less ignorant of the country which contained his lady than of her name and condition. At the same point of time the lady had a similar dream, and became no less violently enamoured of the knight; but, not being equally at liberty to wander about the world, could only deplore the misfortune of being tormented by desires which she could not reasonably hope to gratify.

During three long months the traveller proceeded in his search without any consolation but the consciousness that his adventure was strictly conformable to the practice of chivalry; but hav-

ing at length reached the sea-side, he perceived a spacious castle, which seemed to be the residence of some opulent and powerful baron. Its walls on one side were washed by the sea, which there formed a commodious haven filled with shipping, and the only gate on the land-side was guarded by a strong and lofty tower.

This tower contained the long-sought object of the knight's affection. She was wife to the castellan, who ardently loved her, and whose jealousy was equal to his love. He kept her from all intercourse with mankind in a rich and spacious apartment, the windows of which were secured by strong bars of steel, and at one of these windows was the lady enjoying the prospect when our knight made his appearance. The earl her husband was sitting immediately below her in a small court or garden, and was fortunately much occupied by a game at chess, at which he was engaged with one of his vassals.

The knight, attracted by the appearance of a female figure, rode towards the window; and on a near approach had the pleasure to recognise the well-known features of the lady of the dream.

He looked up into the tower,
And merrily sang he of amour;

And when she heard him so begin,
Unnethes might that lady blyn,
That she ne had called him her unto;
But, for her lord, she durst noght so.

The features of her lover were concealed by his helmet, but his general air and appearance were sufficient to make him known; and though she had no means of explaining to him her situation, she had the satisfaction of seeing that his sagacity had instantly discovered the cause of her embarrassment. Instantly ceasing to address her, he advanced towards the earl, dismounted from his horse, and kneeling before him said, "Sir earl, I am a knight of a far country; I am driven from my possessions in consequence of having killed in a duel a knight whose family was more powerful than my own; I know, from the appearance of your territory which I have traversed, that you also are hardly beset by your enemies, and I come to offer you a sword which perhaps may prove fortunate in your service." The earl willingly accepted his proposals, and in a few days had the satisfaction of seeing his enemies completely defeated by the enterprising adventurer, whose prowess in the field appeared to be irresistible, and

who discovered, as if by intuition, all the projects of his opponents, while his own were perfectly impenetrable. In a short time the whole country was cleared of invaders, and the castle, so lately filled with alarm and confusion by the crowds who had retired to it as a place of refuge, exhibited the tranquil formality of a peaceful court. All were delighted with the victorious stranger; and the earl, who could now hunt his dogs and fly his falcons without being frightened, set no bounds to his gratitude.

As the tower which contained his wife was accessible only by a single door, the key of which never quitted his pocket, and as he was perfectly ignorant of the passion which, through the agency of a vision, had united the souls of the two lovers while their bodies were separated by an interval of a few hundreds of leagues, the good man did not think it necessary to watch over or to interfere with the amusements of his deliverer, who generally passed his evenings in a solitary ride, and always contrived in returning to pass as near as possible to the window of his mistress.

A letter soon she cast him till,
Whereby he might wite all her will.

The knight took up the *parchemyne**,
And red the French full fair and fine,
And, als soon as he red it had,
Was he never in heart so glad.

Nothing now remained but to obtain an interview with the lady, which however was a matter of no small difficulty. Fortunately the knight was not apt to be stopped by difficulties; and as these had been long since foreseen, he had already matured the project by which he hoped to overcome them.

He began by requesting the earl to bestow on him a piece of the waste ground beyond the tower, for the purpose of building a habitation; and as this request proved his intention of prolonging his stay, besides which it was thought that such an outwork to the castle, constructed under his direction, could not but add considerably to the strength of the place, it was joyfully granted. The building advanced with rapidity; its turrets rose

* Letters were usually written on parchment, and either fastened with a pin or sewed. Ladies were generally able to write, though few knights could read; but parchment was so scarce that to procure a piece for a love-letter was often very difficult. The word "*French*" (in the next line) is used for language in general.

into the air; and subterraneous galleries, apparently intended for the secure reception of magazines and for the confinement of prisoners, extended in every direction to a considerable distance. One of these advanced under the tower; and when the work was in this state, the knight sent for an architect of eminence from a neighbouring city, to whom he imparted his secret, and who, under his own eye, made a communication with the floor of that building, so artfully concealed that no eye could discover it. The success of his project was now secure; but the foreign artist was in possession of the secret, and his fidelity might possibly be corrupted.

> The knight *quit* * well the service
> Of the mason for his *quayntise* †;
> He slew him soon, that ilke day,
> For fear that he should ought say.

And after this murder, which, because the sufferer was an inferior, is related without any marks of reprobation, he gaily repaired to the interview with his mistress, in whose embraces he received the reward of his past, and formed the project of new, acts of treachery.

At parting, the lady put on his finger a gold

* acquitted. † cunning.

ring, with which he hastened home, and soon after repaired to the great hall, where he joined his sovereign and the court at table. The earl, who always delighted in his conversation, was on this occasion more pleased than ever with the unusual gaiety of his favourite, till he discovered on the knight's finger the ring with which he had some reason to be well acquainted. He had presented it to his wife as a memorial of his affection; it was the work of an eminent artist, and had been formed under his own particular directions. He thought it impossible that two such rings should exist in the world; he mused in silence, and, finding himself unable to explain a mystery of such consequence to his peace of mind, rose abruptly from table and proceeded towards his wife's apartment in the tower. But the crafty knight, who had carefully noted the progress of the suspicions which he had intentionally excited, hastened to the lady by his "privy way," restored the ring, and again disappeared after a moment's conference. The earl entered soon after, accosted his wife with great affection, examined her fingers one after another, and after some hesitation requested her to show him the ring which he had given her as a memorial of his tenderness. The lady told him that it was very safe; rallied him on his endless

suspicions; complained of her long and strict imprisonment; and for a time trifled with his impatience by the most extravagant professions of fondness: but finding that her assurances produced no effect, and being unwilling to excite his jealousy too far, she at length drew out her purse, and with a careless air put the trinket into his hands. This evidence was too strong for his doubts. The similarity of the two rings was indeed astonishing; but that which he held in his hands was certainly no illusion, whereas it was possible that his eyes might have deceived him respecting that which he had beheld on the knight's finger. He was now fully satisfied, solicited the forgiveness of his wife, who was much amused by his penitence, and staid with her till the dawn of day summoned him to his morning devotions.

After hearing mass, he sent for the knight, and proposed to him a hunting party in the neighbouring forest; but the favourite excused himself. "I have just received," said he, "from my own country the most agreeable tidings. My peace is made with the family of the knight whom I slew in single combat, and my mistress, whom I have long and passionately loved, has kindly condescended to be the bearer of the good news. If my lord would be pleased to dine with me at his return

from the field, my happiness and hers would be complete." The earl, after promising to attend him, departed for the chase, and the knight prepared to accomplish the remainder of his project.

Having first conveyed his mistress from her tower to his own apartment, he fully instructed her in the part which he desired her to act, and then, taking off her usual dress, assisted her in putting on a rich Hungarian habit, with a head-dress so charged with ornaments as to alter very considerably her whole appearance. Thus accoutred she expected the earl's arrival, received him most courteously, placed him by her side at table, and directed her whole discourse to him. She had so effectually disguised her voice, and the topics on which she spoke were so artfully chosen, that for a time he felt no suspicion: but on surveying her features in succession, and on meeting her eyes, which she never turned from him, he could not help thinking that this Hungarian stranger bore a singular resemblance to his own wife; and though much ashamed of his uneasiness, he could not view without emotion the tenderness which she manifested for another. He recollected the adventure of the ring; he considered the strength of the tower, the key of which was safe in his pocket, and his reason was

satisfied; but his heart still was uneasy. He inquired into the name and character of the beautiful stranger, and heard from the knight a story so plausible as almost to overcome all his uneasiness; but he was particularly rejoiced to hear, both from the knight and from the lady, that it was their intention to return almost immediately to Hungary. The dinner at length was finished, and the earl mechanically repaired to his wife's apartment for the purpose of calming his agitated spirits.

In the mean time, a few minutes being sufficient to rid the lady of her Hungarian ornaments, and to invest her in her usual dress, she was replaced by her lover in the tower, and had full time to compose herself before the arrival of her husband. Never in his life had he beheld her with so much pleasure as on the present occasion. He gazed at her with an attention which she well knew how to interpret, though she kindly appeared to impute it to his affection, and after a long scrutiny convinced himself that her resemblance to the Hungarian beauty was most perfect; but that their features, though apparently cast in the same mould, were animated by a very different expression, and that the humble and submissive air of his gentle countess was far more pleasing than the assured and confident demeanour of

his friend's mistress. By degrees every trace of his former doubts and jealousy was completely obliterated; he gave way to his fondness, which was returned with much seeming sincerity; and, after passing the night in the tower, rose in the morning full of confidence in the fidelity of a wife whom he was on the point of losing for ever.

No sooner had he quitted her to go to morning prayers than the knight again conducted her to his own house, and again dressed her in the habit of the preceding day. A ship had been long ready for him in the harbour, and had received on board, during the night, the whole of his effects. The lady therefore being properly disguised, he hastened to church, and, when mass was over, accosting the earl, requested that he would kindly assist at the ceremony of his marriage to his leman, to whom he wished to be solemnly united before his departure, which, the wind being now fair, he was unwilling to delay. The earl readily consented, and dispatched two officers to the knight's house to conduct the lady to church, whilst he conversed with his friend on the state of the country, and on the measures which would be requisite to insure its future prosperity. The marriage ceremony was performed with due solemnity, the earl acting as sponsor; after which they march-

ed in procession to the sea-side, where the unsuspecting husband, taking his wife by the hand, assisted her in climbing the side of the vessel, and, when on board, publicly presented her to the knight as his bride, and recommended her to his love and protection. He then took his leave and returned to the city; the anchor was weighed, the sails filled, and a brisk and favourable gale speedily carried the lovers to their place of destination, leaving the husband to lament at leisure their treachery and his disappointment.

Maxentius ended this tale, as he had begun it, with the assurance that Florentin would on the following day recover his speech; the intelligence was instantly conveyed throughout the whole city; and Diocletian, who loved a prophecy almost as much as a story, participated in a still higher degree than any of his subjects in the general curiosity. The empress, had she been provided with any number of additional tales, would have found it no longer practicable to excite his attention. He rose at the dawn of day, and, after hearing mass, proceeded to the council-chamber attended by his peers, by the Seven Wise Masters, and by a crowd of burgesses. Shortly after, his son was brought up, decently dressed, but pale, weak,

and emaciated; and, after saluting his father with due respect, addressed him to this effect: "Your wife, sir, is a very wicked woman, and moreover a sorceress. She cast a spell, on my arrival at your court, in virtue of which, had I opened my lips before the expiration of seven days, I should have instantly died, and my excellent preceptors would have been sacrificed to her malice. All this I fortunately found recorded in the moon and stars. Had I not taken the precautions which have now saved my life, you would have treated me as a father in this neighbourhood once treated his son who was predestined to surpass him in wealth and power." "Dear son!" replied the emperor, "thy words delight me! Each of thy preceptors has told me a story in thy behalf, and I now find that thou also art provided with one of these agreeable narratives, which I shall doubtless admire beyond the best of theirs. I therefore charge thee, as thou valuest my blessing, to relate it." The prince bowed, and immediately began the story of

THE RAVENS.

At a sea-port to the westward of this city lived, some time since, a merchant who by numerous voyages had acquired a princely fortune, and who,

preserving a taste for his early profession, frequently amused himself during the summer by sailing from island to island. He had an only son, to whom he had given an excellent education; and the young man, though only fifteen years old, had so far penetrated into the most difficult secrets of nature as to have acquired the languages of birds. One day, while the father and son were sailing in a new and favourite vessel, a pair of ravens continued for some time to flutter over their heads, occasionally settling on the masts or in the shrouds, and croaking so incessantly that the old merchant was much disturbed and almost deafened by their noise. "I wish," cried he, "since I cannot silence those vile birds, that I could at least discover the subject of their discourse!" "That," replied the son, "is addressed to me; they have been telling my fortune, and they assure me that I shall one day be much richer and more powerful than thou art, and that a time will come when thou shalt be happy to support the sleeve of my cloak whilst I am washing; and that my mother will be proud of holding the towel to wipe my hands." "Indeed!" exclaimed the father. "Art thou so discontented and ambitious? But I will soon try whether the croakers are not mistaken in their prophecy!" With these

words he suddenly caught the youth round the waist, and threw him headlong into the sea; after which he altered his course, and, still boiling with indignation, sailed back to port.

The youth was fortunately an expert swimmer, and, seeing an island at some distance, exerted himself so effectually that by the blessing of Providence he at length reached the shore. But the island was uninhabited, and during four days which he passed on it he was unable to procure a morsel of food; yet he had the consolation of receiving assurances, from different sorts of birds who frequented the island, that his trial would be short, and that Providence would ultimately reward him for his sufferings. On the fifth day he discovered a fisherman in his boat, and had the good fortune to attract his attention. He now partook of the poor man's provisions; but his entertainer, having no means of supporting him in future, had no sooner conveyed him to land than he sold him to a certain lord who was steward to the king of the country.

This monarch, with whose name and dominions we are unacquainted, was at that time tormented by a very singular misfortune. Three ravens thought fit to become his constant companions. Whilst he was in the field pursuing his amuse-

ments, they fluttered over his head, and croaked so loudly and incessantly that the poor king was almost stunned by their shrieks. If he retired to his palace they established themselves near his window, and continued to distract him. It was in vain that he changed his lodging from room to room or from palace to palace; his quick-sighted and winged adversaries were always at hand. Their lungs were indefatigable, and their bodies appeared to be invulnerable.

The king in no place might have peace,
For of their noise would they nought cease,
Nowther for bow ne for sling;
No man might them away bring.

Vast rewards had been offered for their destruction; the king was even willing to bestow the hand of his only daughter, with half of his kingdom as a dower, on the person who could release him from his importunate and clamorous companions. At length he determined to convoke a solemn parliament of all his nobles and wise men. If he could obtain no relief from his torment, it would be some alleviation to talk about it.

During this time the merchant's son was become the favourite slave of the king's steward,

and, having heard the reasons for summoning the convention, obtained permission to accompany his master for the purpose of beholding the solemnity. The monarch made a long and eloquent speech, described very pathetically the discomfort of hearing at every moment of the day three hoarse voices which were perfectly unintelligible, and concluded by offering the hand of his daughter and a participation of the sovereignty to him who could relieve him from his distress. But his counsellors were silent. The archives of that country did not afford a single case in point, and it appeared that no ravens, since the establishment of the monarchy, had hitherto attempted to molest the tranquillity of the throne.

The youth now assured his master, in a whisper, that he was able to unravel this mystery, and was ready to do so on receiving from the king a solemn assurance that the reward should not be withheld; and the steward having announced this proposal, the king bound himself by oath, before the assembly, to perform the conditions. "Sir," said the youth, "the two ravens who sit together and appear to be engaged in constant dispute, are two males; and the subject of their altercation is that old female who sits apart and is generally silent, though she sometimes takes her share with con-

siderable acrimony. The elder of the two disputants was originally her mate; but during a year when corn was extremely scarce he considered her maintenance as too troublesome, and abandoned her. She would probably have perished, but for the attentions of the younger raven, who fed her during the time of famine, and has continued to prove to her his tender attachment. The old raven has since become once more enamoured of her charms, such as they are, and insists upon renewing his former engagement; but neither his old mistress nor his young rival will consent to his claim. Hence their incessant clamour. They have however agreed that the matter shall be decided by your majesty, whose wisdom and equity are well known to them, and who, they are confident, will bestow on this very intricate dispute all the attention which it merits. When you shall have pronounced sentence they will immediately quit your court and retire into the forest."

The king, rejoiced at the prospect of recovering his tranquillity, and willing to merit the good opinion of the ravens, referred the cause to his parliament, where it was discussed with due solemnity; after which, being satisfied with their sentence, he stood up and published his award, "that the old raven should forego all future claim

to his first mate, for whom he had shown himself deficient in affection by quitting her in the year of famine, and that she should become the lawful mate of the young petitioner, whose love and constancy were highly laudable." Scarcely had he pronounced these words when the old raven, uttering a furious scream, flew off with great velocity, and the happy couple, after expressing as well as they could their gratitude to their royal judge, departed in an opposite direction.

The youth now received the hand of the princess amidst the applauses of the whole council, who were much pleased with his sagacity; his bride was overjoyed at being united to a husband who was young and handsome; and the old king, who retained an involuntary dread of the whole feathered creation, reflected with great delight, that under the protection of such a son-in-law he might henceforth sleep in peace even in the midst of an aviary.

The happiness of this child of fortune was now complete; yet he could not help feeling a strong desire to behold once more his mother, who had always treated him with kindness, and even the father who had so unjustly thrown him into the sea. Whilst he was devising means of seeing them, a vision informed him that, being reduced

to poverty, and ashamed of remaining amongst the witnesses of their former opulence, they had lately sought an obscure retreat in the very city which was now under his government. Thus informed, he dispatched two serjeants with orders to find out the strangers, and to announce to them that the prince of the country had heard of their arrival, and intended to dine with them on the following day. The astonished couple made the best preparations in their power for the reception of their royal visitant, and, when the table was prepared, presented him with water to wash; the husband supporting with great respect and humility the long sleeve of his cloak, while the wife presented the towel. Thus was fulfilled the original prophecy of the ravens, which the son immediately recalled to his father's recollection. The old merchant, who thought himself devoted to instant death, turned pale and trembled; but the prince, having embraced his parents, ordered them to be lodged with him in the palace, and during the remainder of their lives continued to cherish them with unceasing duty and affection.

Florentin, having concluded his tale, proceeded to relate the crimes of the empress, who, on being confronted with him, confessed the truth of

the accusation. Diocletian therefore ordered her to immediate execution; and his subjects of all ranks applauded the justice of the sentence—

Her feet they *fest unto her swire**,
And let her flie in middes the fire;
Thus was the lady's ending day,
And thus was she quit her *journée* †.
The child lived with great honour,
And after his father was emperour,
And led his life with workes wise,
And ended *seyn* ‡ in Goddes service.
Thus-gate § endeth all this thing.
Jesu grant us his blessing!

* fastened to her neck. † day's work, enterprise.
‡ since. § in this way.

Miscellaneous Romances.

This very general title is intended to comprise all those romances which do not naturally find a place in some of the preceding classes. As the different pieces are far from being of equal merit, or of equal antiquity, they do not seem to require any general introduction. A short notice prefixed to each will point out the MSS. or printed copies which have been consulted.

FLORICE

AND

BLAUNCHEFLOUR.

THIS romance is usually supposed to be of Spanish origin. The earliest edition of it noticed in Percel, Bibl. des Rom. is entitled "Flores y Blancaflor, in 4to. en Alcala 1512;" of which a French translation was, not long after, published, with the title "Histoire amoureuse de Flores et de Blanchefleur, traduite de l'Espagnol par Jacques Vincent, in 8vo. Paris 1554," and Lyon 1571. This was the ground-work of the elegant compendium published by M. le Comte de Tressan, who, in a short introduction, expresses his belief that the Spanish metrical romance was written about the beginning of the *ninth century!* a supposition too extravagant to require refutation. We may be almost certain that the Spanish poem is nothing more than a translation or imitation of a

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French metrical romance, composed probably in the 13th century, and rendered into English in the early part of the 14th; a copy of the latter being still extant in the Auchinleck MS. It is in a very imperfect state, consisting of 850 lines only, which probably formed little more than half of the entire poem; but as it agrees very exactly with M. de Tressan's abridgment, I have made use of that work* for the purpose of completing the story.

During the time that the Emperors of the West continued to hold their court at Rome, one of them had a nephew named Prince Perse, presumptive heir to his throne, and already possessed of large domains in Italy, whom his conduct had so much endeared to his subjects that they unanimously wished to see his virtues transmitted to a new generation, and eagerly promoted his union with the beautiful Topase, daughter of the duke of Ferrara, and niece to the duke of Milan, at whose

* It is proper to apprise the reader, that in borrowing my materials from M. de Tressan I have been far from wishing to imitate the graces of his style, which would have very ill accorded with the remainder of the narrative.

court she had been carefully educated. Topase had herself some pretensions to the imperial throne, so that the noble families on both sides were well disposed, from political considerations, to promote the match; and the young persons having been seized at their first meeting with an irresistible passion for each other, the marriage was shortly concluded, and they received the nuptial benediction from the hands of the Pope, together with a profusion of indulgences, consecrated rosaries, and relics.

Nothing could exceed the delight of this charming couple during the first three weeks that followed the celebration of their nuptials. But prince Perse was of a warm and impetuous disposition; the fair Topase was no less so; and scarcely were the usual festivities attendant on such a union at an end, when they both became so impatient for the birth of a child, that the day was scarcely long enough for their devotions, their alms, their visits to the seven churches of Rome, and the propitiatory ceremonies by which they attempted to procure the intercession of the most popular saints and most efficacious relics in Rome: yet neither saints nor relics thought fit to produce the pregnancy of Topase.

The bride and bridegroom were almost in de-

spair, when a pious Spaniard observed to them that they had neglected to request the assistance of one saint, whose credit in heaven was so great that he had never yet met with a refusal. This was St. James. Prince Perse, resolved to repair his neglect, made a solemn vow, that, if the great object of his wishes could be accomplished, he would instantly undertake, together with his wife, a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Compostella. This fatal compact with the saint produced its effect. On the following night an angel appeared in a dream to Perse and to Topase; informed them that their wishes would be gratified; but at the same time obscurely foretold a sad series of calamities which menaced them in consequence of their impatience in desiring to anticipate the designs of Providence. Both were much startled by this terrible vision: but at their age disagreeable impressions are soon effaced; and as the apostle faithfully kept his promise, they proceeded to fulfil their engagement, took leave of the emperor, and without any attendants set off for Galicia.

At this time the kings of Galicia and of Portugal, both of whom were Christians, and tributary to the Saracen king of Murcia, had entered into a league to shake off the Mahometan yoke; and at the very moment when our pilgrims entered Gali-

cia, the Saracen prince, whose name was Felix, incensed at this insolence of his vassals, had sent his troops against the allies with orders to lay waste the country, to destroy all the male inhabitants, and to carry into captivity the women and children.

Prince Perse and his charming Topase, unconscious of the danger which awaited them, faint with heat, and fatigued by their long journey, were reposing themselves at the entrance of a forest, when the Saracen troops rushed upon them, and instantly murdered the unhappy prince in the arms of his wife, who, on waking, found herself covered with his blood. The officer who commanded the division, astonished at the beauty and majestic appearance of the fair pilgrim, conveyed her immediately to Felix, who compassionating her youth and distress, ordered one of his principal officers to conduct her to his queen, to whom he related in a letter the calamity which had befallen her, at the same time requesting that the lovely captive might receive every alleviation of her misery which the compassionate kindness of a royal mistress could bestow.

The queen of Murcia was of the same age, and nearly as beautiful as Topase: she therefore readily sympathized in the sorrows of so young a mourner,

and treated her with such attentive kindness as shortly obtained her entire confidence, and drew from her a disclosure of her real name and rank, and of the motives which had produced her fatal pilgrimage to Galicia. From this moment the names of mistress and slave were abolished between them; they became inseparable friends; they slept in the same chamber; and the queen, who was also pregnant, assured her dear Topase that their children should be educated together under her own eyes, and be taught from the beginning to cherish those sentiments of affection for each other which united the hearts of their parents.

The two princesses were delivered on the same day, which was that of Palm-Sunday. The Christian subjects of Felix were indulged in the liberty of celebrating publicly their principal festivals, so that palm-leaves interwoven with garlands of flowers were exhibited in all the streets, and even within the walls of the palace; and the young queen, in allusion to the day, which she considered as the festival of flowers, directed that her infant son should take the name of Florice, and that the daughter of her friend Topase should bear that of Blanchefleur.

But scarcely had this unfortunate mother brought her daughter into the world, when the image of

her murdered husband, recurring in all its horrors to her imagination, entirely overcame the powers of life already weakened by sickness and misery. The queen, in hopes of consoling and reviving her, caused the two children to be brought to her; but the fainting Topase, at the sight of her infant, whose features painfully recalled to her those of its father, began to shed tears *in such abundance that they nearly filled a saucer which was accidentally placed beside her.* Then stretching out her arms to the child, she exclaimed "O my daughter! sole remnant of my former happiness, receive from thy mother the only present which it is in her power to bestow! May these tears serve as the water of thy baptism, and bestow on thee the blessed character of christianity!" With these words she poured on the head of the infant the contents of the saucer, pronouncing at the same time the words of the sacred ceremony; conjured the queen, as a last favour, that she would permit the child to be instructed in the principles of the holy religion to which she had just devoted it; and, having applied her lips to the hand of her friend and benefactress, uttered a faint scream, raised her eyes to heaven, and expired.

Blanchefleur, of course, was unconscious of the loss of her parent. Educated, together with Flo-

rice, under the eyes of the queen, and treated by her with the utmost tenderness, she naturally considered his mother as her own, and loved him with the affection of a sister. She acquired with facility all the accomplishments which were suitable to her sex; while he, by an uncommon address in all his exercises, announced the future prowess of a perfect knight, and early displayed the gallantry and tenderness of that character by his anxiety to obtain the applause, and to secure the affections, of his charming foster-sister.

Mohady, a famous mollah, well-instructed in the tenets of the Mahometan religion, and zealous for its success, was chosen as the preceptor of the young prince, and was much scandalised at finding that the image of Blanchefleur was for ever standing in the way of the ideas which he was solicitous to inculcate. Florice, though full of respect for the faith of his parents, could not be persuaded that the religion of Blanchefleur was absurd; and was still less disposed to believe that the houris of Mahomet's paradise could be either more beautiful or more amiable than the charming girl whom he had loved from his cradle. Mohady stormed, and complained to the queen, who laughed at his remonstrances: but Felix was more tractable; and the zealous mollah succeeded in

convincing him that it would be expedient to remove Florice from his female companion, and to send him to the court of his uncle the king of Algarva, who resided at Montorio, for the completion of his studies.

The young prince was almost in despair when he heard that he was under the necessity of submitting to this dreadful banishment. But his father represented to him that his superior rank demanded from him superior excellence; and that the stern laws of chivalry imperiously required from the candidate for its honours that he should have been disciplined to hardships, and early removed from the indulgence of the paternal roof. "Go, fair son," said he; "go in quest of glory; go, that thy name may be renowned;" the queen added, "and that thou mayest deserve and obtain thy mistress!" The last exhortation determined Florice, who was of opinion that the lover of Blanchefleur ought to be peerless in valour and in courtesy; so that he consented to depart for Montorio: but though the preparations for his journey were already made, he could not consent to go till he had taken leave of the charming Blanchefleur, and convinced her of the regret with which he tore himself from her. She expressed, with the most winning simplicity, her affection and her

sorrow; and drawing from her finger a ring containing a small talisman, "Florice," said she, "accept this as a pledge of our mutual love; look on it every day; if thou seest its brilliancy tarnished, it is a sign that my life or my liberty is in danger. But obey the orders of thy father; I doubt not thy constancy nor thy readiness to assist me when it shall be necessary." The approach of Felix prevented any further conversation.

The arrival of the young prince was celebrated at Montorio by the most splendid festivals and tournaments, from which however he received no satisfaction. He had submitted to banish himself from all that rendered life agreeable, but habit could not reconcile him to exile. His only amusement was to cultivate a small garden, in which he had disposed borders of white flowers, so as to trace out the initials of his mistress's name; here at day-break he used to chant some couplets which he had composed in her honour*; and here he was one day surprised by Mohady, at a moment when, in his anxiety to obtain the hand of Blan-

* The verses which M. de Tressan has put into the mouth of Flores are very elegant, and have been with equal elegance translated by the late Mr. Way. They are to be found in the second volume of his Fabliaux, p. 285.

chefleur, he breathed a prayer to the God of the Christians as his most powerful intercessor.

Mohady became furious. He instantly dispatched, by a confidential messenger, a letter to Felix, in which he stated the necessity of separating Blanchefleur for ever from her lover, whose zeal for the Mahometan faith was on the point of yielding to his affection for that dangerous beauty. A second letter, addressed to Ajoub, principal Iman of the great mosque, related all the circumstances which had passed, and urged that priest, as he valued the interests of religion, to contrive, by some means or other, the destruction of Blanchefleur.

Felix, proud of his descent from Omar, and a bigot from education, was well disposed to comply with the request of Mohady, but was unable to devise a pretext for his conduct, when Ajoub furnished him with it. Blanchefleur was in the habit of raising poultry, with which she sometimes supplied the royal table; and the wicked Ajoub, having bribed a servant to convey some poison into the body of a chicken which she had sent to the king, accused her of an intention to destroy her former protector, and supported the charge so powerfully by his influence with the judges, that the innocent victim of his malice was unanimously

condemned to suffer death, unless she should find, before the day of execution, a knight who should venture to assert her innocence.

Whilst this was passing in the court of the king of Murcia, an event took place at Montorio, which awakened Florice from the apathy and indifference into which the absence of his mistress had plunged him. Two Moorish knights, who had signalised themselves by a series of adventures in Africa, arrived in the country of Algarva, and dispatched a herald to the court of the king, reproaching him with having degenerated from the valour of the original Arabs, and defying his best knights to a trial of their prowess. The challenge was accepted; two knights were deputed to chastise the insolence of these strangers, but they failed to return; two more were sent; but, as they also disappeared, the warriors of Montorio became less anxious to encounter the unknown champions, and on the third day the herald repeated his message without exciting much impatience in his hearers. But Florice was now present, and addressing himself to the herald, "Return," said he, "to thy masters, and say, that the courtesy and gallantry which reign in this court are the best pledges for the courage and honour of its knights. Say too that I am prepared

singly to attack thy two champions, and to punish their audacity."

The prince now threw himself at the feet of his uncle, requesting the honour of being immediately knighted, that he might encounter these Arabs of the Desert, and prove to them that he was no unworthy descendant of the illustrious Kaled. The king joyfully performed the ceremony, dressed him in his own armour, and put into his hands the victorious sword of Kaled, which he had carefully preserved in his treasury. A superb Moorish courser was then presented to him: he vaulted into the saddle, and shortly arrived at the tents of his antagonists.

The two knights, though little skilled in courtesy, had however too much honour to unite in attacking a single adversary, and presented themselves in succession. The first assailant broke his lance against the shield of Florice, and was himself thrown to the ground. The second resisted the shock, and was not overcome till after a long and obstinate conflict; but the youth and activity of Florice at length prevailed; and the generosity with which he used his victory having gained the esteem and admiration of both his enemies, they willingly proceeded with him to liberate their prisoners, and promised to confess before all the

ladies of Montorio, that the courtesy inspired by their charms tends to exalt and improve all the virtues of chivalry.

At the moment when Florice was enjoying his victory, the whole glory of which he secretly attributed to his lovely mistress, and was stooping to kiss the talisman, which he had received as the pledge of her affection, he beheld with horror and surprise its blackened and opake surface, which appeared to exhibit an appearance of smoke, with occasional flashes of flame. He shuddered, turned pale, uttered an exclamation of horror, burst from the arms of his new friends, rushed to his horse, sprung into the saddle, and disappeared in an instant.

Having proceeded, without stopping, during the whole of that day and of the following night, he arrived at day-break at the capital of Murcia, and, concealing himself behind a turret till the gates were opened, entered the city unperceived. Already a string of carts loaded with wood began to move through the streets, preceded by troops, and by executioners carrying torches. In the rear of the procession was a waggon bearing a female covered with a black veil and loaded with chains; a cadi bearing a long scroll marched behind; and a second troop of armed men closed the

march. Florice, again surveying his talisman, perceived it to be more clouded than ever. He lowered the vizor of his helmet, rode up to the waggon, and with a faltering voice exclaimed, "Who are you?" "Ah!" replied the female, "I call to witness my God and my Redeemer that Blanchefleur is not guilty!" The voice pierced his soul. Drawing his sword, and threatening with instant death the first man who should disobey his commands, he ordered the escort to stop; and having questioned the cadi, and learnt from him the atrocious calumny preferred against his mistress, he exclaimed, "Traitor Ajoub! be it my task to confound and punish thee, and to succour unprotected innocence! Go, cadi, say to Felix that an unknown knight demands surety in his court, and presents himself to defend Blanchefleur, and to fight her accusers."

The laws of chivalry imposed upon Felix the necessity of ordering the combat; he therefore sent for Ajoub, and communicated to him the defiance. Ajoub was neither of an age nor of a profession suited to a champion; but he had a son, not less ferocious than himself, whose giant size and strength had already raised him to a considerable command in the armies of Felix, and who readily undertook to support his father's quarrel.

The lists were soon prepared. The son of Ajoub threw down his gauntlet, and repeated aloud the accusation against Blanchefleur, while Florice exclaimed, "Traitor, thou liest in thy throat! behold me ready to maintain my assertion." A fire was immediately kindled at the extremity of the lists; two waggons, in one of which was placed Ajoub and in the other Blanchefleur, stood together on the outside of the barriers, and the whole space was surrounded by a numerous guard of soldiers.

The two champions advanced from the opposite extremities, conducted by their sponsors. That of Florice was a young knight named Selim, who had recognised the prince under his disguise, and had demanded permission to attend him. The judge of the tournament then gave the signal; and the combatants, having shattered their lances, drew their swords, and began the mortal conflict. Florice, with great coolness, parried the blows of his adversary, and patiently waited for the most favourable moment of making his attack; but his horse, having received a wound in the neck, became ungovernable, and bore him, in spite of his efforts, to the very edge of the lists where stood the waggons. Blanchefleur, drawing aside her veil, cried out, "Ah, Florice! why art not thou

here to assist me?" whilst the son of Ajoub, redoubling his blows, anticipated an easy victory. But the scene was quickly changed. The prince, determined to relieve the alarms of his mistress, exerted his whole powers: every stroke of his sword was followed by torrents of blood; his arm seemed to move with the rapidity of lightning, and his adversary was already covered with wounds; when Florice, putting up a short prayer to the God of the Christians, aimed a terrible blow at the unwieldy son of Ajoub, which separated his head from his body. The father at the same moment springing from the hands of his guards, rushed towards the prince, who, with another blow, sent his head to accompany that of his son. A thousand voices at once proclaimed the innocence of Blanchefleur, who was borne in triumph to the queen, at the same time that a young slave of Ajoub, throwing himself at the feet of Felix, confessed that he had prepared by his master's orders the poisoned chicken; upon which the body of the atrocious Imari was immediately consigned to the flames.

The triumph of innocence was now complete; but Florice, aware of the dangers which might attend a longer stay in his father's capital, having kissed the hands of the king and queen as well as

of Blanchefleur, expressed by signs his gratitude to the faithful Selim, and, setting spurs to his horse, immediately quitted the city and plunged into the forest. Selim then explained to Blanchefleur, who scarcely dared to hope that her lover had been her deliverer, the reasons which had necessitated his immediate departure, and promised to go and join his master, for the purpose of concerting with him the most probable means of securing their future correspondence.

Florice returned with as much speed as possible to Montorio, where he found his uncle not a little alarmed by his absence. His bloody armour and wounded horse exhibited proofs of his having found an opportunity of signalizing his valour; but as he persisted in refusing to relate his adventure, his uncle abstained from harassing him with useless inquiries, and satisfied himself with expressing the most unfeigned joy at his return.

But the constant anxiety which preyed upon the mind of Florice soon affected his health, and produced a dangerous fever. Spain at that time possessed the best physicians in Europe; and the sultan of Algarva having procured for his nephew the assistance of the celebrated Averroés, who resided at the court of Cordova, that able man, after relieving the worst symptoms of the complaint, suc-

ceeded in discovering, and related to the sultan, the real cause of the disease. The sultan, anxious for the recovery of his nephew, immediately wrote to the king of Murcia a most pressing letter, in which he conjured him to send to his court the beautiful Blanchefleur; but this kind measure produced an effect the most opposite to his intentions. Felix, far less anxious for the happiness or even for the health than for the religious tenets of his son, determined to follow without loss of time the advice of Mohady; and, for the purpose of insuring the final separation of Florice and Blanchefleur, ordered the unfortunate girl to be seized and carried off to the port of Carthagena, where she was sold as a slave to some Greek merchants, who were then ready to set sail for Alexandria. The merchants, rejoiced at obtaining such a prey, instantly embarked with her, and, the wind being fair, soon landed with her in Egypt.

The queen of Murcia, justly indignant at the insult offered to herself, in seizing as a prisoner any one so immediately under her protection, but much more incensed at the cruelty of her husband to the two persons who were most dear to her, overwhelmed Felix with reproaches. But it was too late; and the crime was accomplished.

Selim flew to acquaint Florice with his misfortune; and the prince, who was already informed by his ring of some impending mischief, instantly took horse, and, hastening home, was mysteriously introduced by Selim to the queen's apartment.

However unwilling to risk a long separation from her son, this tender mother could not disapprove of his departure in search of Blanchefleur. She therefore embraced him, gave him her blessing*, and drawing a ring from her finger, "Have now, lief son," said she "this ring. Whilst thou preservest it, neither fire shall burn, nor water drown, nor weapon injure thee, and all thy wants shall be instantly supplied." Florice having gratefully accepted the ring took a tender leave of his mother, and before day-break set off with Selim for Carthagena.

Though disguised as merchants, the young prince and his chamberlain travelled with considerable magnificence; and, being arrived at the port, took up their lodging in one of the principal houses in the city, where they were served with great deference and respect, and occupied the principal seats at table.

* Here begins the metrical fragment.

All that therin were
All they maden glad cheer;
And ate and dronk each one with other:
Ac Florice thought all another.
Eat ne drink ne might he nought,
On Blanchefleur was all his thought.

The air of grandeur which distinguished him, and the settled melancholy of his demeanour, soon attracted the eyes and awakened the curiosity of his hostess, who began, by observing to her husband that the elegant stranger was certainly no merchant; and, finding her remark disregarded, addressed her discourse to Florice himself:

" Child, full of mourning I thee see;
" Thus sat herein, this *enderdai**,
" Blancheflour, that fair may.
" Here in was that maiden bought,
" And over the sea she was y-brought—
" To Babiloyne they will her bring,
" And sell her to Kaiser other to king.
" Thou art alike her of all thing;
" Of semblant, and of mourning;
" But thou art a man, and she is a maid:"
Thus the wife to Florice said.

* other day.

Tho Florice heard his leman *neven**,
So blithe he was of that *steven*†,
That his heart became all light.
A cup of gold he let fill right;
" Dame," he said, " this *haill*‡ is thine,
" Both the gold and the wine;
" Both the gold and the wine eke,
" For thou of my leman speak:
" On her I thought, for her I fight,
" And, wist I where her find I might,
" Tho should no weather me *assoine* §,
" That I ne shal her seek at Babiloine."

The travellers passed only one night at Carthagena, and, embarking next morning with a favourable wind, shortly arrived in Africa, where the prince, " on reaching the land where his leman resided, thought himself in Paradise." He could not, at first, discover any traces of his mistress; but he was told that the amiral of Babylon had proclaimed a magnificent festival, and he thought it certain that at such a festival he must discover, or receive intelligence about, the peerless Blanchefleur.

On his way to Babylon he reached another fair

* name. † sound. ‡ health.
§ prevent, excuse.—Fr.

city, where the host and hostess were no less courteous than those of Carthagena, and again acquired the certainty that his pursuit was properly directed. Here, too, whilst he sat at a repast which his grief of mind prevented him from tasting,

Then spoke the loverd of that inn.
" Thus sat, this other day, herein,
" That faire maid Blancheflour.
" Both in hall, and eke in bower,
" Ever she made mourning cheer,
" And *lemente** Florice her lief sire.
" Joy ne bliss ne had she none,
" Ac on Florice was all her moan."
Florice *het*† a cup of silver white,
And a mantle of scarlett
Y-panned all with *menivere*‡,
And gave his hostess there.
" Have this," he said, " to thine honour,
" And thou it might thank Blancheflour."

He then proceeded to question his host and hostess, and was told that his mistress had certainly been purchased by the amiral of Babylon;

* bemoaned. † took.
‡ lined with meniver, (menu vair, Fr.) or gray fur.

that he had paid for her three shekels full of gold; and that all who had witnessed her incomparable beauty were persuaded that she was destined to be his queen.

Florice, after passing a sleepless night, determined before his departure to ask the advice of his kind host concerning the most practicable means of obtaining an introduction to Blanchefleur; but the good man had already told all that he knew, and could only advise him to consult a friend of his who dwelt by the side of a bridge on the road to Babylon, and at a short distance from that city. At the same time he drew from his finger a ring, which, he said, would serve as an introduction to his friend: and the prince, having thankfully accepted the ring, and rewarded his host with a magnificent present, proceeded on his journey.

The burgess to whom he was addressed, and whose hospitable mansion was pointed out by the bridge, was named Dayre. He was a man of great wealth and politeness, and having beheld the ring which the prince brought with him as a token, entertained him sumptuously, and offered his best assistance to relieve him from the anguish which seemed to prey upon his spirits. Florice, thus encouraged, revealed to him the secret of his birth, informed him of his passion for Blanche-

fleur, related to him her unfortunate history, and ended by conjuring him to suggest the means of obtaining an interview with her. Dayre, who with some reason considered the young man's project as the suggestion of madness, endeavoured to dissuade him from the enterprise by laying before him a picture of the amiral's power and wealth. "My son," said he, "thou seekest thine own destruction. The amiral is the suzerain of at least fifty kings, all as powerful as thy royal father; yet should they all, with their united forces, attempt to gratify thy wishes, they would be unable to wrest thy mistress from his hands. Babylon itself is a populous kingdom inclosed in a city. It is sixty miles in circuit; it contains twenty castles, so vast that each is equal to a market-town; the walls are also protected by a hundred towers, any one of which would resist all the forces of a mighty monarch:

"And though all the men that beth y-born,
"Hadden it, upon their death, y-sworn,
"That should win thy may so soon
"As from the heaven high the sun and moon!

"The tower," continued he, "in which the women are confined, is a thousand toises in length

by a hundred in breadth; its materials are the purest marble, and a mortar so hard that no steel can cut it:

" And the *pomel* *, above the lead,
" Is y-wrought with so much *rede* †,
" That men no firen o'night burn,
" Neither torch ne lanterne.
" Such a pomel was never *bigonne* ‡,
" It shineth o'night so o'day doth the sun.

" The women's apartments, four-and-twenty in number, are guarded by eunuchs, whom no bribe can tempt from the faithful discharge of their duty. Indeed, were they negligent of their charge, it would be impossible that their crime should escape detection, as the morals of these ladies are protected, as you shall hear, by powerful enchantments. You must know that the sultan selects a new wife every year, and the ceremonies observed on the occasion are as follows:

" Then shall men fetch down off the *stage* §
" All the maidens of *parage* ||,

* cupola. † craft. ‡ begun, undertaken.
§ story, (étage, Fr.) the floor where the women were lodged. || rank, high birth. Fr.

" And bring hem into an orchàrd,
" The fairest of all *middelard* *.
" About the orchard goeth a wall,
" The worst stone is chrystal.
" There men may seien, on the stone,
" Mochel of this world's wisdom.
" And a well there springeth in
" That is wrought with mochel gin.
" The well is of mochel price;
" The stream cometh from Paradise.
" The gravel in the ground of precious stone,
" And of virtue, y-wis, each one.
" Of saphires, and of sardoines,
" Of onyxes and calchedoines.
" Then is the water of so mochel *eye* †,
" Gif there come any maiden that is *forlaie* ‡,
" And bow to the grounde,
" For to waschen her honde,
" The water will yell as it were wode,
" And become on her so red so blood!
" Which maiden the water fareth on so,
" She shall soon be *fordo* §!
" And thilke that ben maidens clean,
" They may hem washe of the *rene* ||;

* the earth. Sax. † awe; i. e of such dangerous virtue.
‡ seduced. § destroyed. || clear stream.

" The water will erne still and clear,
" Shall it hem make no dangere.
" At the *well-heved* * there stant a tree,
" The fairest that may on earth be;
" It is y-cleped the tree of love,
" For flowers and blossoms beth in above.
" And thilke that clean maidens be,
" Men shall hem bring under that tree,
" And which so falleth on that flower,
" She shall be chosen queen with honour.
" And gif there any maiden is,
" That the amyral *halt* † of most price,
" The flower shall on her be went,
" Through art and through enchantement.
" Thus he cheseth through the flower,
" And ever we hearkeneth when it be Blanche-
" flour!"

Florice, having foreseen considerable difficulties in the execution of his enterprise, had listened with much anxiety, but without despair, to the greater part of this recital; but at its conclusion he lost all courage, and, fancying that he already saw his mistress in the arms of the detested amiral, sunk lifeless to the ground.

* spring-head. † holden.

The benevolent Dayre could not behold without pity the symptoms of a passion which he now deemed to be incurable. He therefore, after some deliberation, communicated to his young friend a project which, though extremely hazardous, might possibly, if pursued with skill and caution, produce the gratification of his wishes.

"You must assume," said he, "the disguise of a mason, and, repairing to the tower, appear to examine with the greatest attention its structure and dimensions. The porter, whose character I well know, will immediately accost you, and inquire into your business. He will perhaps treat you with brutality; but you will answer him with the utmost respect, and tell him that you are an architect, and, having orders to construct a similar tower in another country, are desirous of viewing a most distinguished model. The man is equally curious and covetous. He will enter into conversation with you for the sake of asking questions, and will soon propose to you to play at chess with him, in hopes of winning your money. You will take with you, in the first instance, only thirty marks, which you will lose to him; and he will then anxiously request you to return and take your revenge. On the following day

take with you a larger sum; exhibit, if you think fit, a little more skill, so as to alarm his fears; but suffer him ultimately to gain the whole. On the third day you must overwhelm his avarice by your generosity. Stake large sums, and lose them with carelessness; display, without affectation, the rich golden cup which I have seen in your possession, and to gain which he would readily stake his body and soul. He will press you most eagerly to play for it, and will offer to risk against it whatever he is worth. After raising his anxiety to the utmost, make him an offer of it, declaring to him at the same time, that your wealth enables you to consider such a present as a mere trifle. This will completely dazzle and overpower him; he will devote himself to you as your slave; and you may then put his courage and ingenuity to any trial which you may think proper."

Florice was charmed with this contrivance, and executed it with ability and success. The porter, indeed, was dreadfully alarmed when he first learnt the dangerous service that was expected from him, and repented the rash oath by which he had bound himself to an inconsiderate youth, perfectly careless of his own safety, and indifferent to that of others. But as Florice had in-

formed him of his whole history, he began to reflect that his benefactor was the only son of a powerful monarch, from whom he might expect the possession of unbounded wealth; and that life is often hazarded on much less flattering prospects; he therefore concluded by requesting a delay of three days, during which he promised to devise some expedient for gratifying the prince's wishes.

Blanchefleur and all her companions were passionately fond of flowers, and it was the porter's duty to supply them in profusion. Casting his eyes on the hampers, in which these flowers were usually conveyed, he thought that one of them might without difficulty contain a man; and Florice having tried the experiment, his friend covered him with roses and lilies, and ordered a couple of stout slaves to convey that hamper, together with the rest, into Blanchefleur's apartment. The slaves obeyed; but

> They bade God give him evil *fin* *,
> That so many flowers did therin,

and growing more and more surly as they struggled under the unexpected load, they stopped at the

* end, Fr.

first apartment, which belonged to a maiden named Clarice, instead of proceeding to that of Blanchefleur; and, having deposited their burthen, again repeated their execrations, and retired.

Clarice was, fortunately, the intimate and confidential friend of Blanchefleur, and, still more fortunately, happened to be alone when the hamper arrived. She immediately approached it to inspect the flowers, when Florice, almost suffocated with heat, and breathless with the expectation of seeing his long lost mistress, on hearing the light steps of a single female, suddenly started up in his hamper and prepared to rush into her arms. The sight of a spectre would not have been more astonishing to Clarice. She involuntarily uttered a shrill and loud scream, which echoed through the apartments, and presently brought a number of female slaves to her assistance. Florice finding his secret betrayed, though he knew not whether by accident or design, hearing the crowd of females who hurried towards the chamber, and expecting to be dragged to instant execution, stood silent and motionless in his hamper, and resigned himself to a fate which he believed to be inevitable. But Clarice, with admirable presence of mind, making him a sign to crouch down beneath the flowers, in-

stantly remedied the confusion, and with perfect serenity of countenance replied to the questions of her attendants,

"To this *coupe* * ich came, and wold
"The flowers handle and behold;
"Ac there, or ich it ever wist,
"A butterfly to-gain me flist.
"Ich was so sore adrad of than,
"That shrieken and *greden* † I began."
The maidens halde therof glee,
And turned again, and let Clarice be.

Having extricated herself from this difficulty, she ran to the apartment of Blanchefleur, and, while her eyes sparkled with joy, "Come away," said she, "come and see the present I have received from the garden! Such a flower! If you only look on it for a moment I am sure it will give you infinite pleasure." "Do not mock my grief," replied Blanchefleur, "by talking to me of pleasure! I am assured that the amiral is resolved to make me his wife; but never, no, never shall he take me alive to his arms. Florice, perhaps,

* basket. The word *coop* has still in some of our provincial dialects a nearly similar meaning.

† cry out, Say.

may have forgotten me, but never will I forget the sacred promise of preserving my fidelity inviolate!" Clarice listened to her with a mysterious smile, of which she was unable to comprehend the meaning, and, seizing her hand, only said, "Come now and see this curious flower;" and dragged her up to the hamper, from which Florice immediately issued. Blanchefleur, speechless with joy and astonishment, sunk into his arms, and whilst Florice pressed her to his heart in silent rapture,

Clarice beheld all this,
Their countenance, and their bliss,
And laughing said to Blanchefleur,
"*Fellow* *, knowest thou ought this flower?
"Little ere, ne wouldest thou it see;
"And now, thou ne might it let fro thee!
"He must ken well mochel of art,
"That thou wouldest give therof any part!"

The lovers now threw themselves at her feet, which they bathed with tears, imploring her not to betray them to the amiral; and the good-natured girl not only promised to keep their secret, but to assist them to the utmost of her power in

* companion.

the further prosecution of their amours. It was impossible to be more inconveniently situated than they were, for the purpose of obtaining that nuptial benediction which was necessary to legalize and to consecrate their union, and it was no less impossible, after Clarice had "brought them to a bed wrought with silk and cendale, and drawn the curtains round," that two lovers so long separated by fortune, and so well convinced of each other's constancy, should not consider themselves as husband and wife. They therefore satisfied their own scruples, and those of their good friend Clarice, by the most solemn promise of being publicly married at the first convenient opportunity.

Now had the amiral swich a *wone**,
That every day there should come
Three maidens out of her bower,
To serven him, up in the tower,
With water, and cloth, and basin,
For to washen his hondes in.
The third should bring comb and mirour,
To serven him with great honour.

And as this ceremony was performed by all the

* custom.

ladies in rotation, each pair being on duty for two successive days, it unfortunately came to the turn of Clarice and Blanchefleur, on the morning after the arrival of Florice. Clarice rose with the sun, and hastened to call her friend, who promised to follow immediately; but having failed to keep her word, the dexterous confidante assured the amiral that the poor girl had spent the whole night in prayers for his safety and happiness, and was, for that reason, incapable of attending her duty. This excuse was so well delivered that the amorous monarch was perfectly satisfied; but as the same story, however plausible, was not likely to succeed a second time, Clarice earnestly besought Blanchefleur to be more watchful on the following day; when finding that after repeating her summons more loudly than usual she obtained no answer, she very naturally concluded that the recollection of her recent danger had kept her friend awake, and that she must be already arrived at the palace. So strong was this impression on her mind, that when, upon her appearing before the amiral, he repeated his former question, she was utterly unprovided with an answer. Her haughty master, incensed at this mark of neglect on the part of that Blanchefleur who had so lately been wearying Heaven with prayers for

his happiness, instantly ordered his chamberlain to repair to her apartment, and to explore the cause of her absence. The chamberlain executed his commission, entered her bower, advanced to her bed, opened the curtains, beheld her fast asleep, saw another face on the same pillow, and returned, almost petrified with astonishment, to relate the story to his master. The amiral, not less astonished, seized his sword, and proceeded with his officer to the bed; and "yet was the sleep so fast on their eyes" that the happy couple were unconscious of his intrusion. Florice was so young that his face did not betray his sex; but the amiral, uncovering his breast, perceived that he was a man, and, boiling with rage, uttered an exclamation which wakened the sleeping lovers.

"Say me now, thou, bel ami,
"Who made thee so hardi,
"For to come into my tower,
"To ligge there by Blaunchefloure?
"To *wrother-hale* * were ye *bore* †,
"Ye shollen *tholie* ‡ death therefore!"

Neither of the lovers was able, in this first mo-

* malediction. † born. ‡ suffer, Sax.

ment of surprise and horror, to give any answer to his questions; but as the desire of learning all the circumstances of this inexplicable adventure had, in the first instance, stopped his uplifted sword, he now determined that the culprits should be examined before his whole council, and in the mean-time ordered them into strict confinement. His peers being assembled, he related to them the circumstances of the case, which were so strong that they could not avoid awarding the punishment of death against the guilty couple; but when the prisoners were brought into court, their youth, their air of innocence, and the evident anxiety of each for the fate of the other, awakened the utmost compassion of their judges, who flocked round them and surveyed them with pity and astonishment. Florice had still on his finger the ring bestowed on him by his mother, and hastily putting it into the hand of his mistress, earnestly conjured her to preserve it, adding that when she should be secure, he could meet his fate, whatever it might be, with proper fortitude. But Blanchefleur, not less generous than her lover, scorned the means of surviving him; and during this contest of affection the ring was dropped on the ground and picked up by one of the lords, who

hastened with it to the amiral, and related to him with tears of admiration the singular scene which he had witnessed.

The monarch, though he felt for Florice the rage of a disappointed rival, was not unmoved by this narrative, and, ordering the prisoners up to the throne, demanded of the youth if he had any thing to say. He replied that he had merited death, and was prepared to suffer it, but humbly solicited the pardon of Blanchefleur; while she boldly proclaimed her own guilt, and refused, in the presence of the astonished amiral, any boon which she could not share with Florice. "Then," said he, "ye shall both die!" and, drawing his sword, saw them rush forward together, and stretch out their necks to receive the blow.

The amiral, wroth though he were,
Both him changed mood and cheer.
For either for other woulde die,
And he saw so many a weeping eye,
And for he had so mochel loved the may,
Weeping he turned his head away;
And his swerd it fell to ground—

The lovers were pardoned; but the amiral insisted on knowing the contrivance by which Flo-

rice had been introduced into Blanchefleur's apartment; and this the youth refused to tell until he had obtained the full pardon of his accomplice. This being readily granted, he proceeded to relate his whole history, and to explain the means by which, after his long pilgrimage in search of Blanchefleur, he had overpowered the fidelity of the porter, and gained admission in a flower-basket to the bower of the ladies. The amiral, having thus learned the noble birth and valorous exploits of the young knight, seated him by his side; conferred on him a principal command in his armies; and permitted him to be solemnly united to his mistress in one of the Christian churches which were tolerated in his dominions. He even expressed his wish to be instructed in our holy religion; and, by the advice of Blanchefleur, renounced his wicked habit of changing his wives annually, and gave his hand to the lovely Clarice. The festivals instituted in honour of this marriage were scarcely finished, when Florice received the news of his father's death, and the invitation of his baronage to take possession of the throne of Murcia; but notwithstanding his anxiety to revisit his mother, he could not immediately tear himself from the amiral, his new convert, nor

separate Blanchefleur from the amiable Clarice :
so

They betaught the amiral our *dright* *,
And they came home when they might,
And let crown him to king,
And her to queen, that sweet thing ;
And *underfong Christendom* † of priestes hond,
And thonked God of all his sond.
Now ben they both dead,
Christ of heaven home their souls led.
Now is this tale brought to an end,
Of Florice and of his leman hend, &c.

* our Lord. † received baptism.

A COPY of the following romance is preserved in the public library at Cambridge, MSS. More. 690. 35. and another in the Harleian MSS. 1701. $\frac{8}{VI}$ from which my transcript was made. It was never printed. Mr. Warton having already analysed it (vol. i. p. 184.), I have compressed the following abstract as much as possible, and have avoided a repetition of such extracts as were already before the public.

Mr. Warton has justly observed, that the history of the emperor Jovinian, in the 59th chapter of the Gesta Romanorum, is nearly identical with this romance. The incidents however are not exactly similar, and in some of these the Latin prose has a manifest advantage over the minstrel poem.

ROBERT OF CYSILLE.

476 Lines.

ROBERT king of Sicily, brother to Pope Urban and to Valemond emperor of Germany, was among the most powerful and valorous princes of Europe; but his arrogance was still more conspicuous than his power or his valour. Constantly occupied by the survey of his present greatness, or by projects for its future extension, he considered the performance of his religious duties as insufferably tedious; and never paid his adorations to the Supreme Being without evident reluctance and disgust. His guilt was great; and his punishment was speedy and exemplary.

Once upon a time, being present during vespers on the eve of St. John, his attention was excited by the following passage in the Magnificat; "deposuit potentes de sede; et exaltavit humiles." He inquired of a *clerk* the meaning of these words; and, having heard the explanation, replied that such expressions were very foolish,

since he, being the very flower of chivalry, was too mighty to be thrown down from his seat, and had no apprehension of seeing others exalted at his expense. The clerk did not presume to attempt any remonstrance; the service continued; Robert thought it longer and more tedious than ever; and at last fell fast asleep.

His slumber was not interrupted, nor indeed noticed by any of the congregation, because an angel having in the mean time assumed his features, together with the royal robes, had been attended by the usual officers to the palace, where supper was immediately served. Robert, however, awaked at the close of day; was much astonished by the darkness of the church, and not less so by the solitude which surrounded him. He began to call loudly for his attendants, and at length attracted the notice of the sexton, who, conceiving him to be a thief secreted in the church for the purpose of stealing the sacred ornaments, approached the door with some precaution, and transmitted his suspicions through the key-hole. Robert indignantly repelled this accusation, affirming that he was the king; upon which the sexton, persuaded that he had lost his senses, and not at all desirous of having a madman under his care, readily opened the door, and was glad to see

the supposed maniac run with all speed to the palace. But the palace gates were shut; and Robert, whose temper was never very enduring, and was now exasperated by rage and hunger, vainly attempted by threats of imprisonment, and even of death, to subdue the contumacy of the porter. While the metamorphosed monarch was venting his rage at the gate, this officer hastened to the hall, and, falling on his knees, requested his sovereign's orders concerning a madman who loudly asserted his right to the throne. The angel directed that he should be immediately admitted; and Robert at length appeared, covered with mud, in consequence of an affray in which he had flattened the porter's nose, and had been himself rolled in a puddle by the porter's assistants.

Without paying the least attention to these accidental circumstances, or to the clamours of the wounded man, who loudly demanded justice, he rushed up to the throne; and though a good deal startled at finding not only that, and all the attributes of royalty, but even his complete set of features, in the possession of another, he boldly proceeded to treat the angel as an impostor, threatening him with the vengeance of the pope and of the emperor, who, he thought, could not fail

of distinguishing the true from the fictitious sovereign of Sicily.

" Thou art my fool!" said the angel;
" Thou shalt be shorn, every deal
" Like a fool, a fool to be;
" For thou hast now no dignity.
" Thine counsellor shall be an ape;
" And o clothing you shall be shape.—
" He shall ben thine own fere:
" Some wit of him thou might lere.
" Hounds, how so it befalle,
" Shall eat with thee in the hall.
" Thou shalt eaten on the ground;
" Thy 'sayer shall ben an hound,
" To assay thy meat before thee;
" For thou hast lore thy dignity!"

He cleped a barber him before,
That, as a fool, he should be shore,
All around like a frere,
An *hand-brede* * above the ear;
And on his crown maken a cross †.
He gan cry and make noise;

* a hand's breadth.

† The custom of shaving fools, so as to give them in some measure the appearance of friars, is frequently noticed in our oldest romances.

And said they should all abye,
That did him swich villainy, &c.

Thus was Robert reduced to the lowest state of human degradation; an object of contempt and derision to those whom he had been accustomed to despise; often suffering from hunger and thirst; and seeing his sufferings inspire no more compassion than those of the animals with whom he shared his precarious and disgusting repast. Yet his pride and petulance were not subdued. To the frequent inquiries of the angel whether he still thought himself a king, he continued to answer by haughty denunciations of vengeance, and was incensed almost to madness when this reply excited, as it constantly did, a general burst of laughter.

In the mean time Robert's dominions were admirably governed by his angelic substitute. The country, always fruitful, became a paragon of fertility; abuses were checked by a severe administration of equal justice; and, for a time, all evil propensities seemed to be eradicated from the hearts of the happy Sicilians—

Every man loved well other;
Better love was never with brother.

In his time was never no strife
Between man and his wife:
Then was this a joyful thing
In land to have swich a king.

At the end of about three years arrived a solemn embassy from Sir Valemond the emperor, requesting that Robert would join him, on Holy Thursday, at Rome, whither he proposed to go on a visit to his brother Urban. The angel welcomed the ambassadors; bestowed on them garments lined with ermine and embroidered with jewels, so exquisitely wrought as to excite universal astonishment; and departed in their company to Rome.—

The fool Robert also went,
Clothed in loathly garnement,
With fox-tails riven all about:
Men might him knowen in the rout.
An ape rode of his clothing;
So foul rode never king.

These strange figures, contrasted with the unparalleled magnificence of the angel and his attendants, produced infinite merriment among the spectators, whose shouts of admiration were enlivened by frequent peals of laughter.

Robert witnessed, in sullen silence, the demonstrations of affectionate regard with which the pope and the emperor welcomed their supposed brother; but at length, rushing forward, bitterly reproached them for thus joining in an unnatural conspiracy with the usurper of his throne. This violent sally, however, was received by his brothers, and by the whole papal court, as an undoubted proof of his madness; and he now learnt for the first time the real extent of his misfortune. His stubbornness and pride gave way, and were succeeded by sentiments of remorse and penitence.

We have already seen that he was not very profoundly versed in scripture history, but he now fortunately recollected two examples which he considered as nearly similar to his own; those of Nebuchadnessar and Holofernes. Recalling to his mind their greatness and degradation, he observed that God alone had bestowed on them that power which he afterwards annihilated—

" So hath he mine, for my gult;
" Now am I full lowe pult;
" And that is right that I so be:
" Lord, on thy fool have thou pitè!
" That error hath made me to smart
" That I had in my heart;

" Lord, I 'leved not on thee:
" Lord, on thy fool have thou pitè.

" Holy writ I had in despite;
" Therefore 'reaved is my right;
" Therefore is right a fool that I be:
" Lord, of thy fool have thou pitè," &c.

The sincerity of his contrition is evinced, in the original, by a long series of such stanzas, with little variation of thought or expression; but the foregoing specimen will, perhaps, suffice for the satisfaction of the reader.

After five weeks spent in Rome, the emperor, and the supposed king of Sicily, returned to their respective dominions, Robert being still accoutred in his fox-tails and accompanied by his ape, whom he now ceased to consider as his inferior. When returned to the palace, the angel, before the whole court, repeated his usual question; but the penitent, far from persevering in his former insolence, humbly replied, " that he was indeed a fool, or worse than a fool; but that he had at least acquired a perfect indifference for all worldly dignities." The attendants were now ordered to retire: and the angel, being left alone with Robert, informed him that his sins were forgiven, gave him a few salutary admonitions, and added,

" I am an angel of renown
" Sent to keep thy regioun.
" More joy me shall fall
" In heaven, among mine feren all,
" In an hour of a day,
" Than here, I thee say,
" In an hundred thousand year;
" Though all the world, far and near,
" Were mine at my liking:
" I am an angel; thou art king!"

With these words he disappeared; and Robert, returning to the hall, received, not without some surprise and confusion, the usual salutations of the courtiers.

From this period he continued, during three years, to reign with so much justice and wisdom that his subjects had no cause to regret the change of their sovereign; after which, being warned by the angel of his approaching dissolution, he dictated to his secretaries a full account of his former perverseness, and of its strange punishment; and, having sealed it with the royal signet, ordered it to be sent, for the edification of his brothers, to Rome and Vienna. Both received, with due respect, the important lesson: the emperor often recollected with tenderness and compassion the de-

graded situation of the valiant Robert; and the pope, besides availing himself of the story in a number of sermons addressed to the faithful, caused it to be carefully preserved in the archives of the Vatican, as a constant warning against pride, and an incitement to the performance of our religious duties.

SIR ISUMBRAS.

THE following romance is abridged from the MS. copy in the library of Cajus College A 9, collated with the printed copy in Mr. Garrick's plays. It consists of 130 six-lined stanzas.

THERE was once a knight, who from his earliest infancy appeared to be the peculiar favourite of fortune. His birth was noble; his person equally remarkable for strength and beauty; his possessions so extensive as to furnish the amusements of hawking and hunting in the highest perfection. Though he had found no opportunity of signalizing his courage in war, he had borne away the prize at numberless tournaments; his courtesy was the theme of general praise, his hall was the seat of unceasing plenty; it was crowded with minstrels, whom he entertained with princely liberality, and the possession of a beautiful wife and three lovely children completed the sum of earthly happiness.

Sir Isumbras had many virtues; but he had one vice. In the pride of his heart he forgot the Giver of all good things, and considered the

blessings so abundantly showered upon him, as the proper and just reward of his distinguished merit. Instances of this overweening presumption might perhaps be found in all ages among the possessors of wealth and power; but few sinners have the good fortune to be recalled, like Sir Isumbras, by a severe but salutary punishment, to the pious sentiments of Christian humility.

It was usual with knights to amuse themselves with hawking or hunting whenever they were not occupied by more serious business; and as business seldom intervened, they thus amused themselves every day in the year. One morning, being mounted on his favourite steed, surrounded by his dogs, and with a hawk on his fist, Sir Isumbras cast his eyes on the sky, and discovered an angel, who, hovering over him, reproached him with his pride, and announced the punishment of instant and complete degradation.

The terrified culprit immediately fell on his knees; acknowledged the justice of his sentence; returned thanks to Heaven for deigning to visit him with adversity while the possession of youth and health enabled him to endure it; and, filled with contrition, prepared to return from the forest. But scarcely had the angel disappeared when his good steed suddenly fell dead under him; the hawk

dropped from his fist; his hounds wasted and expired; and being thus left alone he hastened on foot towards his palace, filled with melancholy forebodings, but impatient to learn the whole extent of his misfortune.

He was shortly met by a part of his household, who, with many tears, informed him that his horses and oxen had been suddenly struck dead with lightning, and that his capons were all stung to death with adders. He received the tidings with humble resignation, commanded his servants to abstain from murmurs against Providence, and passed on. He was next met by a page, who related that his castle was burned to the ground; that many of his servants had lost their lives; and that his wife and children had with great difficulty escaped from the flames. Sir Isumbras, rejoiced that Heaven had yet spared those who were most dear to him, bestowed upon the astonished page his purse of gold as a reward for the intelligence.

A doleful sight then gan he see;
His wife and his children three
  Out of the fire were fled:
There they sat, under a thorn,
Bare and naked as they were born,
  Brought out of their bed.

A woful man then was he,
When he saw them all naked be.
The lady said, all so blive,
"For nothing, sir, be ye adrad."
He did off his surcote of *pallade**,
And with it clad his wife.
His scarlet mantle then shore he;
Therein he closed his children three
That naked before him stood.

He then proposed to his wife, that, as an expiation of their sins, they should instantly undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and, cutting with his knife a sign of the cross on his naked shoulder, set off with the four companions of his misery, resolved to beg his bread till he should arrive at the holy sepulchre.

After passing through "seven lands," supported by the scanty alms of the charitable, they arrived at length at a forest where they wandered during three days without meeting a single habitation. Their food was reduced to the few berries which they were able to collect; and the children, unaccustomed to such hard fare, began to sink under the accumulated difficulties of their journey.

* *Pălata*, Lat. *Paletot*, O. Fr. sometimes signifying a particular stuff, and sometimes a particular dress. See Du Cange.

In this situation they were stopped by a wide and rapid though shallow river. Sir Isumbras, taking his eldest son in his arms, carried him over to the opposite bank, and, placing him under a bush of broom, directed him to dry his tears, and amuse himself by playing with the blossoms till his return with his brother. But scarcely had he left the place when a lion, starting from a neighbouring thicket, siezed the child, and bore him away into the recesses of the forest. The second son became, in like manner, the prey of an enormous leopard; and the disconsolate mother, when carried over with her infant to the fatal spot, was with difficulty persuaded to survive the loss of her two elder children. Sir Isumbras, though he could not repress the tears extorted by this cruel calamity, exerted himself to console his wife, and, humbly confessing his sins, contented himself with praying that his present misery might be accepted by Heaven as a partial expiation.

Through forest they went days three,
Till they came to the Grteekish sea;
They grette, and were full wo!
As they stood upon the land,
They saw a fleet come sailand,
Three hundred ships and mo.

With top-castels set on-loft,
Richly then were they wrought,
With joy and mickle pride:
A heathen king was therein,
That Christendom came to win;
His power was full wide.

It was now seven days since the pilgrims had tasted bread or meat; the soudan's galley, therefore, was no sooner moored to the beach than they hastened on board to beg for food. The soudan, under the apprehension that they were spies; ordered them to be driven back on shore: but his attendants observed to him that these could not be common beggars; that the robust limbs and tall stature of the husband proved him to be a knight in disguise; and that the delicate complexion of the wife, who was "bright as blossom on tree," formed a striking contrast to the ragge dapparel by which she was very imperfectly covered. They were now brought into the royal presence; and the soudan, addressing Sir Isumbras, immediately offered him as much treasure as he should require, on condition that he should renounce Christianity, and consent to fight under the Saracen banners. The answer was a respectful but peremptory refusal, concluded by an earnest petition for a little food; but the soudan, having

by this time turned his eyes from Sir Isumbras to the beautiful companion of his pilgrimage, paid no attention to this request;

The soudan beheld that lady there,
Him thought an angel that she were,
Comen a-down from heaven:
"Man! I will give thee gold and fee,
"An thou that woman will sellen me,
"More than thou can *neven* *,
"I will thee given an hundred pound
"Of pennies that ben whole and round,
"And rich robes seven:
"She shall be queen of my land;
"And all men bow unto her hand;
"And none withstand her *steven* †."
Sir Isumbras said, "Nay!
"My wife I will nought sell away,
"Though ye me for her sloo!
"I wedded her in Godis lay,
"To hold her to mine ending day,
"Both for weal and wo."

It evidently would require no small share of casuistry to construe this declaration into an acceptance of the bargain; but the Saracens, having heard the offer of their sovereign, deliberately

* name. † voice.

counted out the stipulated sum on the mantle of Sir Isumbras; took possession of the lady; carried the knight with his infant son on shore; beat him till he was scarcely able to move; and then returned for further orders.

During this operation the soudan, with his own hand, placed the regal crown on the head of his intended bride: but recollecting that the original object of his voyage to Europe was to conquer it, which might possibly occasion a loss of some time, he delayed his intended nuptials; and ordered a fast-sailing vessel to convey her to his dominions; providing her at the same time with a charter addressed to his subjects, in which he enjoined them to obey her, from the moment of her landing, as their legitimate sovereign.

The lady, emboldened by these tokens of deference on the part of her new lord, now fell on her knees and entreated his permission to pass a few moments in private with her former husband; and the request was instantly granted by the complaisant Saracen. Sir Isumbras, still smarting from his bruises, was conducted with great respect and ceremony to his wife, who, embracing him with tears, earnestly conjured him to seek her out as soon as possible in her new dominions, to murder his infidel rival, and to take possession of

a throne which was probably reserved to him by Heaven as an indemnification for his past losses. She then supplied him with provisions for a fortnight; kissed him and her infant son; swooned three times; and set sail for Africa.

Sir Isumbras, who had been set on shore quite confounded by this quick succession of strange adventures, followed the vessel with his eyes till it vanished from his sight, and then, taking his son by the hand, led him up to some rocky woodlands in the neighbourhood. Here they sat down under a tree, and after a short repast, which was moistened with their tears, resumed their journey. But they were again bewildered in the forest; and, after gaining the summit of the mountain without being able to descry a single habitation, lay down on the bare ground and resigned themselves to sleep.

The next morning Sir Isumbras found that his misfortunes were not yet terminated. He had carried his stock of provisions, together with his gold, the fatal present of the soudan, enveloped in the remnant of his scarlet mantle; and scarcely had the sun darted his first rays on the earth, when an eagle, attracted by the red cloth, darted down upon the treasure and bore it off in his talons. Sir Isumbras, waking at the moment, perceived the

theft, and for some time hastily pursued the flight of the bird, who, he expected, would speedily drop the heavy and useless burthen: but he was disappointed; for the eagle, constantly towering as he approached the sea, at length directed his flight towards the opposite shores of Africa. Sir Isumbras slowly returned to his child, whom he had no longer the means of feeding; but the wretched father only arrived in time to behold the boy snatched from him by a unicorn.

The knight was now quite disheartened. But his last calamity was so evidently miraculous, that even the grief of the father was nearly absorbed in the contrition of the sinner. He fell on his knees; and, uttering a most fervent prayer to Jesus and the Virgin, proceeded on his journey.

His attention was soon attracted by the sound of a smith's bellows: he quickly repaired to the forge, and requested the charitable donation of a little food; but was told by the labourers that he seemed well able to work as they did, and that they had nothing to throw away in charity.

Then answered the knight again,
"For meat would I *swink** fain!"
Fast he bare and *drow*†;

* labour. † drew.

They given him meat and drink anon,
And taughten him to bear stone:
Then had he shame enow.

This novitiate lasted a twelvemonth; and seven years expired before he had fully attained all the mysteries of his new profession. He employed his few leisure hours in fabricating a complete suit of armour; every year had brought to his ears an account of the progress of the Saracens; and he could not help entertaining a hope that his arm, though now so ignobly employed, was destined, at some future day, to revenge the wrongs of the Christians, as well as the injury which he had personally received from the unbelievers.

At length he heard that the Christian army had again taken the field; that the day was fixed for a great and final effort; and that a plain at an inconsiderable distance from his shop was appointed for the scene of action. Sir Isumbras rose before day, buckled on his armour; and, mounting a horse which had hitherto been employed in carrying coals, proceeded to the field; and took a careful survey of the disposition of both armies. When the trumpets gave the signal for the charge, he dismounted, fell on his knees, and, after a short

but fervent prayer to Heaven, again sprang into his saddle, and rode into the thickest ranks of the enemy. His uncouth war-horse and awkward armour had scarcely less effect than his wonderful address and courage in attracting the attention of both parties; and when, after three desperate charges, his sorry steed was slain under him, one of the Christian chiefs made a powerful effort for his rescue, bore him to a neighbouring eminence, and presented to him a more suitable coat of armour, and a horse more worthy of his heroic rider.

When he was armed on that steed,
It is seen yet where his horse *yede* *,
And shall be evermore.
As sparkle glides off the glede †,
In that stour he made many bleed,
And wrought hem wonder sore.
He rode up into the mountain,
The soudan soon hath he slain,
And many that with him were.
All that day lasted the fight;
Sir Isumbras, that noble knight,
Wan the battle there.

* went. † hot iron.

Knights and squires han him sought,
And before the king him brought;
Full sore wounded was he.
They asked what was his name;
He said, " Sire, a smith's man;
" What will ye do with me?"
The Christian king said, than,
" I trow, never smith's man
" In war was half so wight."
" I *bid** you, give me meat and drink,
" And what that I will after think,
" 'Till I have *kevered*† my might."
The king a great oath sware,
As soon as he whole were,
That he would dub him knight.
In a nunnery they him leaved,
To heal the wounds in his heved,
That he took in that fight.
The nuns of him were ful fain;
For he had the soudan slain,
And many heathen hounds.
For his sorrow they gan sore rue;
Every day they salved him new,
And stopped well his wounds.

We may fairly presume, without derogating

* pray. † recovered.

from the merit of the holy sisters, or from the virtue of their salves and bandages, that the knight's recovery was no less accelerated by the pleasure of having chastized the insolent purchaser of his wife, and the author of his contumelious beating. In a few days his health was restored; and, having provided himself with a "scrip and pike," and the other accoutrements of a Palmer, he took his leave of the nuns, directed his steps once more to the "Greekish Sea," and, embarking on board of a vessel which he found ready to sail, speedily arrived in the port of Acre.

During seven years, which were employed in visiting every part of the Holy Land, the penitent Sir Isumbras led a life of continued labour and mortification; fed during the day by the precarious contributions of the charitable, and sleeping at night in the open air, without any addition to the scanty covering which his pilgrim's weeds, after seven years' service, were able to afford. At length his patience and contrition were rewarded.

After a day spent in fruitless applications for a little food,

Beside the burgh of Jerusalem
He set him by a well-stream,
Sore wepand for his sin.

And as he sat, about midnight,
There came an angel fair and bright,
And brought him bread and wine;
He said, "Palmer, well thou be!
"The King of heaven greeteth well thee;
"Forgiven is sin thine."

Sir Isumbras accepted with pious gratitude the donation of food, by which his strength was instantly restored, and again set out on his travels: but he was still a widower; still deprived of his children, and as poor as ever; nor had his heavenly monitor afforded him any hint for his future guidance. He wandered therefore through the country, without any settled purpose, till he arrived at a "rich burgh," built round a "fair castle," the possessor of which, he was told, was a charitable queen, who daily distributed a florin of gold to every poor man who approached her gates, and even condescended to provide food and lodging within her palace for such as were distinguished by superior misery. Sir Isumbras presented himself with the rest; and his emaciated form and squalid garments procured him instant admittance.

The rich queen in hall was set;
Knights her served, at hand and feet,
In rich robes of pall:

In the floor a cloth was laid;
" The poor Palmer," the steward said,
" Shall sit above you all."
Meat and drink forth they brought;
He sat still, and ate right nought,
But looked about the hall.
So mickle he saw of game and glee,
(Swiche mirths he was wont to see)
The tears he let down fall.

A conduct so unusual attracted the attention of the whole company, and even of the queen, who ordering " a chair with a cushion" to be placed near the Palmer, took her seat in it, entered into conversation with him on the subject of his long and painful pilgrimage, and was much edified by the moral lessons which he interspersed in his narrative. But no importunity could induce him to taste food: he was sick at heart, and required the aid of solitary meditation to overcome the painful recollections which continually assailed him. The queen was more and more astonished, but at length left him to his reflections, after declaring that " for her lord's soul, or for his love, if he were still alive," she was determined to retain the holy Palmer in her palace, and to assign him a convenient apartment, toge-

ther with a "knave" or servant to attend him.

An interval of fifteen years, passed in the laborious occupations of blacksmith and pilgrim, may be supposed to have produced a very considerable alteration in the appearance of Sir Isumbras; and even his voice, subdued by disease and penance, may have failed to detect the gallant knight under the disguise which he had so long assumed. But that his wife (for such she was) should have been equally altered by the sole operation of time; that the air and gestures and accents of a person once so dear and so familiar to him, should have awakened no trace of recollection in the mind of a husband, though in the midst of scenes which painfully recalled the memory of his former splendour, is more extraordinary. Be this as it may; the knight and the queen, though lodged under the same roof, and passing much of their time together, continued to bewail the miseries of their protracted widowhood.

Sir Isumbras, however, speedily recovered, in the plentiful court of the rich queen, his health and strength, and with these, the desire of returning to his former exercises. A tournament was proclaimed; and the lists, which were formed immediately under the windows of the castle,

were speedily occupied by a number of Saracen knights, all of whom Sir Isumbras successively overthrew. So dreadful was the stroke of his spear, that many were killed at the first encounter; some escaped with a few broken bones; others were thrown headlong into the castle ditch: but the greater number consulted their safety by a timely flight; while the queen contemplated with pleasure and astonishment the unparalleled exploits of her favourite Palmer.

Then fell it, upon a day,
The knight went him for to play,
As it was ere his kind;
A fowl's nest he found on high;
A red cloth therein he *seygh* *
Wavand in the wind.
To the nest he gan win;
His own mantle he found therein;
The gold there gan he find.

The painful recollection awakened by this discovery weighed heavily on the soul of Sir Isumbras. He bore the fatal treasure to his chamber, concealed it under his bed; and spent the remainder of the day in tears and lamentations. The

* saw.

images of his lost wife and children now began to haunt him continually; and his altered demeanour attracted the attention and excited the curiosity of the whole court, and even of the queen, who could only learn from the Palmer's attendant that his melancholy seemed to originate in the discovery of something found in a bird's nest. With this strange report she was compelled to be satisfied, till Sir Isumbras, with the hope of dissipating his grief, began to resume his usual exercises in the field: but no sooner had he quitted his chamber than the "squires" by her command broke open the door, discovered the treasure, and hastened with it to the royal apartment.

The sight of the gold and of the scarlet mantle immediately explained to the queen the whole mystery of the palmer's behaviour. She burst into tears; kissed with fervent devotion the memorial of her lost husband; fell into a swoon; and, on her recovery, told the whole story to her attendants, and enjoined them to go in quest of the Palmer, and to bring him immediately before her. A short explanation removed her few remaining doubts; she threw herself into the arms of her husband; and the re-union of this long-separated couple was immediately followed by the

coronation of Sir Isumbras, and by a long series of festivity.

The Saracen subjects of this Christian sovereign continued, with unshaken loyalty, to partake of the plenteous entertainments provided for all ranks of people on this solemn occasion: but no sooner had the pious Isumbras signified to them the necessity of their immediate conversion, than his whole "parliament" adopted the resolution of deposing and committing to the flames their newly-acquired sovereign, as soon as they should have obtained the concurrence of the neighbouring princes. Two of these readily joined their forces for the accomplishment of this salutary purpose, and, invading the territories of Sir Isumbras with an army of thirty thousand men, sent him, according to usual custom, a solemn defiance.

Sir Isumbras boldly answered the defiance; issued the necessary orders; called for his arms; sprang upon his horse; and prepared to march out against the enemy; when he discovered that his subjects had, to a man, abandoned him, and that he must encounter singly the whole host of the invaders.

Sir Isumbras was bold and keen,
And took his leave at the queen,
And sighed wonder sore:

He said, " Madam, have good day!
" Sekerly, as I you say,
" For now and evermore!"
" Help me, sir, that I were dight
" In arms, as it were a knight;
" I will with you fare:
" Gif God would us grace send
" That we may together end,
" Then done were all my care."
Soon was the lady dight
In arms, as it were a knight;
He gave her spear and shield:
Again thirty thousand Saracens, and mo,
There came no mo but they two,
When they met in field.

Never, probably, did a contest take place between such disproportioned forces. Sir Isumbras was rather encumbered than assisted by the presence of his beautiful but feeble helpmate; and the faithful couple were on the point of being crushed by the charge of the enemy, when three unknown knights suddenly made their appearance, and as suddenly turned the fortune of the day. The first of these was mounted on a lion; the second on a leopard; and the third on a unicorn. The Saracen cavalry, at the first sight of these

unexpected antagonists, dispersed in all directions. But flight and resistance were equally hopeless: three-and-twenty thousand unbelievers were soon laid lifeless on the plain by the talons of the lion and leopard, by the resistless horn of the unicorn, or by the sword of their young and intrepid riders; and the small remnant of the Saracen army who escaped from the general carnage quickly spread, through every corner of the Mahometan empire, the news of this signal and truly miraculous victory.

Sir Isumbras, who does not seem to have possessed the talent of unravelling mysteries, had never suspected that his three miraculous auxiliaries were his own children, whom Providence had sent to his assistance at the moment of his greatest distress; but he was not the less thankful when informed of the happy termination of all his calamities. The royal family were received in the city with every demonstration of joy by his penitent subjects, whose loyalty had been completely revived by the recent miracle. Magnificent entertainments were provided; after which Sir Isumbras, having easily over-run the territories of his two Pagan neighbours who had been slain in the last battle, proceeded to conquer a third kingdom for his younger son; and the four

monarchs, uniting their efforts for the propagation of the true faith, enjoyed, "*as the romance tells us*," the happiness of witnessing the baptism of all the inhabitants of their respective dominions.

They lived and died in good intent;
Unto heaven their souls went
When that they dead were.
Jesu Christ, heaven's king,
Give us, aye, his blessing,
And shield us from care!

SIR TRIAMOUR.

THE abstract of the following romance has been made from the copy printed by William Copland, contained in the British Museum (Garrick's plays, K. 10). Bishop Percy mentions two more printed copies as extant in the Bodleian library; a MS. in the public library at Cambridge (690 § 29), and another in his own folio. It consists of 1592 lines.

ARADAS was king of Arragon. He was young, active, and brave; he reigned over a numerous and obedient people; and he added, to the good fortune of wearing a crown, the more enviable felicity of sharing it with the mistress of his heart, the beautiful and affectionate Margaret. But perfect happiness is not given to humanity; and even Aradas and his queen had still one wish ungratified.

Either to other made great moan,
For children together had they none,
Begotten of their body;
Therefore the king, I understand,
Made a vow to go to the Holy Land,
Therefore to fight and to slè.

This sudden and unexpected resolution, when communicated to the queen, filled her with horror and dismay. Though not less anxious than her husband for the completion of their mutual wishes, she doubted the efficacy of the means: her piety suggested to her, that Heaven might possibly be irritated by a vow evidently dictated by impatience; and her affection represented in frightful colours the dangers to which Aradas would be exposed, while employed in slaughtering the crowds of Saracens whose death might be required as the purchase of an heir to the crown of Arragon. But neither the length of the voyage, the hazards of the sea, the dangers of an ungenial climate, nor the multitude and ferocity of the unbelievers, could arrest for a moment the impetuosity of the king: he assumed the cross, assembled an army, and was soon ready to depart. His devotion met its due reward; and the accurate romancer informs us that, on the very

last night which he passed with his queen, his vow had its long-expected operation; though at the time (as the historian sagaciously adds) they were both unconscious of their success.

The moment of separation, however, awakened in the heart of Aradas all those sentiments of tenderness which the hurry of his preparations had suspended. He blended his tears with those of his beloved Margaret; kissed and embraced her a thousand times; and, after having taken his leave, returned again and again to repeat his assurances of love and fidelity; to recommend her to the protection of Heaven, and to reiterate his injunctions to his steward Marrock, whom he left as superintendant of the kingdom, that no pains should be spared to alleviate the sorrow of the queen during his long and necessary absence.

It unfortunately happened that the steward Marrock, to whom this important charge was committed, was the falsest steward that ever abused the confidence of his sovereign. His assiduity to gratify, and even to prevent, the wishes of Margaret was, indeed, unremitting; but it soon appeared that his attentions, instead of being dictated by zeal for his master, were the result of a criminal passion for the queen. Having exhausted all those indirect means of seduction which his

unlimited power in the state enabled him to employ, he had the audacity to make a direct avowal of his wishes, and repeated his solicitations so frequently, that the queen, after trying in vain to recall him to a sense of his duty, was obliged to threaten him with the instant disclosure of his treason. Marrock now changed his plan. He fell on his knees, entreated her to forgive and to conceal the apparent insolence of a conduct which, as he pretended, had been intended only as a trial of her constancy; and retired with the resolution of ruining, if possible, the victim whom he was unable to seduce.

In the mean time, Aradas was, "full far in Heatheness," accomplishing his vow by the slaughter of numberless Saracens.

In the Heathen Land, and also in Pagany,
And in every other land that he came by,
There sprang of him great *los* *.
When he had done his pilgrimage,
And laboured all that great voyage,
With all his good will and liberte,
At *flome* † Jordan, and at Bethlem,
And at Calvary beside Jerusalem,
In all the places was he.
Then he longed to come home—

* praise. † river.

and such had been the rapidity of his military achievements, and so miraculous was the prosperity of his voyage, that he arrived in his dominions while his queen was still "great with child," though, it may be presumed, in daily expectation of her delivery. Never did the lovely Margaret appear so lovely in his eyes. His joy knew no bounds; and the fair partner of his throne forgot, in her delight at her lord's return, the misery she had endured from his absence, and from the insolent addresses of the traitor Marrock. But malice is more provident; and the artful steward seized the earliest opportunity of carrying into effect his long-meditated purpose.

At his first interview with the king, he boldly asserted that the child, to whose birth he looked forward with such pleasure, had been begotten in adultery: and when Aradas, astonished at this unexpected intelligence, reproached him with negligence of his charge, he replied, that he also had long been duped by the dissimulation of Margaret, and had only been convinced of her incontinence by finding her in the arms of an unknown knight, whom, in the first transports of his indignation, he had stabbed with his own hand. He added that the queen, after this discovery,

had spared no pains to seduce him into a participation of her guilt, for the purpose of insuring his secrecy; but that his sense of duty to his master was paramount to every other consideration.

Aradas, always subject to be carried away by first impressions, and blinded by his implicit confidence in the steward's integrity, did not stop to inquire into the truth of the charge, but was proceeding to condemn his queen to the flames, and to order her instant execution, when Marrock, whose calumny might have been possibly disproved, and whose further views would have been infallibly prevented by such a sentence, interfered, and induced the king to commute the punishment.

Marrock said, "This counsel I;—
"Banish her out of your land, truly,
"Far into exile:
"Deliver her an ambling steed,
"And an old knight, her for to lead;
"Thus, by my counsel look you do:
"And give them some spending,
"That may them out of the land to-bring;
"I would no better than so."——

He did her clothe in purple weed,
And set her on an old steed,
That was both crooked and almost blind;
He took her an old knight,
Kin to the queen, and Sir Roger hight,
That was both courteous and kind.
Three days he gave them leave to pass;
And, after that day set was,
If men might them find,
The queen should be brenned stark dead,
In a fire, with flames red:
This came of the steward's mind!
Forty florins, for their expence,
The king bade give them, in his presence,
And commanded them to go;
The lady mourned as she should die;
For all this, she wist not why
He fared with her so.——
The queen began to make sorrow and care,
When she from the king should fare,
With wrong, against all reason;
Forth they went, *in number three*;
Sir Roger, the queen, and the greyhound truly;
Ah! wo worth the wicked treason!

It may be proper in this place to apprise the

reader that the greyhound, who is thus abruptly introduced, had been bred by Sir Roger; that h was remarkable from his uncommon size and fierceness; and that his unexampled fidelity to his master rendered him well worthy to occupy the distinguished place which is allotted to him in the sequel of the story.

While the lovely Margaret was bewailing her unmerited misfortunes; while the good Sir Roger was employed in very useless endeavours to console her; while the whole court of Arragon was plunged in sorrow and consternation from the loss of its brightest ornament; the wicked Marrock was occupied in preparing to seize the long-expected reward of his successful villany.

As the exiles could not travel with much expedition, he easily got the start of them; and stationing himself, with a company of eighteen chosen associates, in the first forest on their way, suddenly assailed them, in the hope of easily overpowering the old knight, and carrying off the defenceless Margaret. But Sir Roger, though unprovided with defensive armour, wielded his sword with such skill and activity, and was so powerfully assisted by his dog, who "full bitterly gan bite," that he soon began to thin the ranks, and to

occupy the whole attention of his assailants. Fourteen of them had fallen beneath the sword of the brave old knight, when Marrock, suddenly attacking him from behind, passed his spear through his body, and extended him lifeless on the ground. But, nearly at the same moment, the queen, finding herself unguarded, sprang from her horse, and concealed herself so effectually in a neighbouring thicket, that Marrock and his four surviving associates, after a long and fruitless search, were compelled to abandon their prey; and quitted the forest, having previously returned to vent their malice by mangling with a thousand wounds the lifeless author of their disappointment.

Margaret, being at length convinced of their retreat, issued from her hiding-place, and found the body of her knight, surrounded by those of his slaughtered enemies. At this cruel aggravation of her calamity she became almost frantic with grief; tore her hair; and bitterly reproached herself for having occasioned the death of her generous protector. At length, awakening to a sense of her present danger, she ran to seize her horse, which had fortunately remained where she left him, and then endeavoured to secure the company of the dog, as a guide through the forest

by which she was encompassed; but the faithful animal seemed inattentive to her caresses, and refused to abandon the body of his master—

She said, "Sir Roger, now thou art dead,
"Who shall now the right way lead?
"For thou mayst speak no more!"
Right on the ground, there as he lay dead,
She kissed him, ere she from him yede;
God wot, her heart was sore:
What for sorrow and dread,
Fast away she gan her speed,
She wist not whither ne where:
The good grey-hound, for weal ne wo,
Would not fro the knight go;
But lay and licked his wound:
He weened to have healed him again,
And thereto he did his pain;
Lo, such love is in a hound!

He even scraped a pit for the dead body; covered it with moss and leaves, and guarded it with constant attention, except during the times when he was employed in securing his own subsistence.

Margaret, under the guidance of Providence, continued her march, and arrived, quite extenuated with fatigue and want, on the borders of Hun-

gary*; where having alighted from her horse by the entrance of a wood, she was suddenly taken in labour, and delivered of a beautiful boy. This was a reward for all her sufferings. The first sounds of her infant's voice, the first view of its features, at once erased all sense of her husband's injustice, of her late misery, and of her present unprotected situation. Having washed and clothed her child, she folded him to her breast, lay down under a tree, and, with full reliance on the protection of Heaven, whose mercies had hitherto guarded her, quietly resigned herself to sleep.

In this state she was discovered by a Hungarian knight, Sir Bernard de Mauservyne, who, in pursuing a hind, was led to the place of her retreat. Having for some time contemplated with astonishment the beauty of her person and the magnificence of her dress, which so ill accorded with the miserable appearance of her horse and her total want of attendants, his courtesy led him to interrupt her slumbers for the purpose of offering her that assistance of which she evidently was in immediate want; and, after hearing so much of her history as she thought fit to communicate,

* From Arragon to Hungary is a long march; but we must not expect from the authors of these metrical romances much attention to geographical accuracy.

placed her, with her child, on his horse, conducted her to his castle, and appointed for her service a retinue suited to her rank. Her child was christened by the name of Triamour; and the little orphan soon became the general favourite of the castle; while Margaret, constantly treated as a sovereign, and daily occupied with the education of her son, experienced a degree of happiness and tranquillity which she had never enjoyed in the possession of the throne of Arragon.

We must now return to the grave of Sir Roger, for whose murder the hand of Heaven was preparing to wreak its vengeance on the head of the wicked Sir Marrock. The faithful greyhound, whom we left on the body of his master, had continued, during seven years, to occupy his post, which he only quitted for the purpose of seeking his daily subsistence. As his prey diminished, the length of his chase gradually increased; and, at the close of the seventh year, at the festival of Christmas, he suddenly appeared, gaunt with hunger, an unexpected visitor in the hall of the king of Arragon. Such an apparition excited general surprise, and particularly attracted the attention of Aradas: but the animal, with a gentleness of demeanour which belied his savage appearance, made the round of the tables and disappear-

ed. He returned on the second day; again surveyed the company, received his pittance, and retreated. The king now recollected the dog; and gave orders to his attendants that, if he should again return, they should follow him without loss of time, in the confidence that he would lead them to the place where Sir Roger and the queen were secreted. On the third day of the festival, the hall was filled at an early hour, and Sir Marrock, for the first time, took his seat among the guests. The greyhound too did not fail to repeat his visit, and, with the rapidity of lightning, instantly sprang upon the murderer of his master.

He took the steward by the throat,
And asunder he it bote;
But then he would not 'bide:
For to this grave he ran.
There followed him many a man,
Some on horse, and some beside.
And when he came where his master was,
He laid him down upon the grass,
And barked at the men again.

The crowd who had followed him, being unable to drive him from the spot, returned with the tidings to the king, who instantly comprehended

the whole mystery. He directed them to dig for the body, which they readily found, and which had been miraculously preserved in such a state of perfection as to be easily recognized. It was then buried in holy ground with all due solemnity, and the faithful dog shortly after expired on the tomb which was raised to the memory of his master. The body of Sir Marrock, after being dragged through the town, was hanged upon a gibbet, and messengers were dispatched in every direction to proclaim these acts of justice, to inquire for the innocent Margaret, and to restore her to that throne from which she had been so cruelly and unjustly driven. But the messengers returned without hearing any tidings of the queen; and the unfortunate Aradas was doomed to expiate, by many years of contrition and remorse, the fatal and precipitate decision by which he had thrown away the means of happiness.

In the mean time the young Triamour received an excellent education in the castle of Sir Bernard, being instructed in all the arts of courtesy under the careful eye of his mother, and by Sir Bernard himself in all the accomplishments preparatory to the exercise of chivalry. He had scarcely finished his fourteenth year when he was considered, by the little court in which he lived, as a model of

beauty, strength, and activity; and having surpassed all his youthful competitors, he became impatient for an opportunity of trying his powers in a conflict with adversaries more worthy of his prowess. His wishes were soon gratified.

The king of Hungary died at an advanced age, leaving an only daughter to inherit his vast possessions. Her early beauty had occasioned her to be universally known by the name of the fair Helen; and she had just entered on her fifteenth year when she was called to wield the sceptre of a kingdom surrounded by powerful and ambitious neighbours, to whose attacks the possession of her person was likely to prove an additional inducement. She was therefore advised by her council to choose, without delay, a partner of the throne, who should be capable of defending it against all competition; and as she felt no predilection for any of her numerous admirers, she ordered the proclamation of a tournament, to be holden at the usual period of six months, for the purpose of ascertaining the successful candidate.

The news of this great event, being quickly spread through Europe, reached Triamour in his retreat. He hastened to Sir Bernard, and earnestly requested the loan of a horse and armour, that he might be enabled to enter the lists, where

he trusted that his conduct would not disgrace the lessons of his kind preceptor: and the good knight, after some admonitions, intended to temper and moderate rather than to repress his eagerness, not only consented to furnish him with the necessary accoutrements, but promised to accompany him to the field of honour.

Triamour, having completed his preparations, threw himself at the feet of his mother, and implored her blessing on this his first enterprise. But her consent was not easily obtained. Thunderstruck at the prospect of such a sudden separation, and aware of all the dangers attendant on the career on which he was now entering, she endeavoured, with tears and solicitations, to divert him from his purpose; till finding him unalterably fixed, and having obtained the promise of his speedy return, she was at length compelled to acquiesce, and reluctantly consigned him to the care of Sir Bernard.

Then was the fair lady set
Full high upon a turret
For to behold that play:
There was many a seemly knight,
Princes, dukes, and lords of might,
Themselves for to assay;

With helmes on their heades bright,
That all the field shone on that light;
They were so stout and gay.

It is unnecessary to enumerate the champions who fought on the three days of this tournament, because the reader will conclude that it attracted all who were distinguished by their valour, and that all were successively overthrown by the irresistible Triamour. At each exploit, Sir Bernard proclaimed aloud, for the information of the heralds, the name of the unknown adventurer, and

Fair Helen that was so mild,
More she beheld Triamour the child,
Than all the other men.

Before the conclusion of the first day she began to feel herself warmly interested in his success, and this interest increased to such a degree as to render her a most anxious spectator of the remaining combats, which were to decide whether her hand should be ultimately allotted to the hero on whom her heart was already bestowed. She beheld therefore with transports of joy the ultimate triumph of young Triamour, and retired from the tournament in the hope of hailing him on the

morrow as king of Hungary, and of receiving him as her husband. But Fate had decreed that her wishes should not be quite so speedily accomplished.

Among the combatants at the tournament were two knights who had entered the lists with very different purposes. One of these was Aradas, who had been attracted to the ceremony partly by the hopes of hearing, at such a concourse of strangers, some tidings of his long-lost Margaret, and partly in the view of suspending, amidst the tumult and fatigue of arms, those sentiments of grief and remorse by which he was incessantly tormented. On the first day, he had been engaged on the same side with Triamour, whose valour and activity he had beheld with admiration. On the second, having tried his force with him; he had been suddenly unhorsed; which only increased his esteem for his adversary. The other knight was Sir James, son of the emperor of Germany, who, being assured by his courtiers that he was the most perfect knight in the world, had projected to begin his career of chivalry by overthrowing all his competitors in the present tournament, and by seizing the beautiful Helen and the crown of Hungary. Big with these views, he had encountered the lance of Triamour; and had been thrown

to a considerable distance in the field, severely bruised, and cruelly mortified. As the law of tournaments did not permit him to enter the lists a second time with his conqueror, he determined to kill him after the ceremony; and, when the combatants prepared to retire to their tents, collected all his adherents, assailed Triamour, who was only accompanied by Sir Bernard, and gave him a dangerous wound in the thigh. But, at the same moment, the spear of Triamour met the face of Sir James, passed into his brain, and laid him lifeless on the ground. His attendants then attacked the two knights, whom they hoped to sacrifice to the manes of their slaughtered master; and Triamour, weakened by the loss of blood, must have been finally overpowered by the superiority of numbers, had he not been rescued by Sir Aradas, who, coming up with his company, put an end to the unequal conflict. Sir Bernard only staid in his tent till he had bound up his friend's wound, and then hastened to his castle, and consigned him to the care of Margaret and to the skill of the best leeches which the country could furnish.

On the following day the combatants repaired to the palace to hear the decision of the fair Helen, who was equally surprised and mortified at being

unable to discover among the company the person of Sir Triamour, or to learn the cause of his absence. She however represented to the company that "she was bound to abide by the conditions of the tournament which she had herself fixed; that she was now become the property of the victor, though he was at present prevented, by some unknown impediment, from preferring his claim; and that she must at least suspend her decision for a year and a day, an interval which the law of arms had secured to him, before his rights could be forfeited by his non-appearance." This award, being strictly consonant to usage, was unanimously confirmed by the persons present, and fair Helen relieved, for the time, from the persecutions of her suitors.

While the lovely princess of Hungary, being totally unacquainted with the tragical termination of the tournament, was bewailing the unaccountable disappearance of her lover; and while the tender Margaret was lamenting the wound of her son; the body of Sir James was carried to the emperor, whose whole court was plunged in consternation by the loss of the hero whose triumph they had so confidently anticipated. The unfortunate father could feel no alleviation of his grief but from the hopes of vengeance on the murderer; of whom

however he only learnt that he was called Sir Triamour, and had, before his last fatal encounter with Sir James, successively overthrown all the bravest knights in Christendom. But it appeared that Sir Aradas was at least an accessary to the deed; and the emperor determined to wash out the disgrace of his son's death in the blood of that monarch and of all the Arragonese. He collected the vassals of the empire, and uniting such an army as Aradas, notwithstanding his skill and bravery, was unable to oppose, overran his whole territory, and finally besieged him in his principal fortress.

Here, however, the defenders, being plentifully supplied with provisions, and guided by an experienced warrior, who understood all the advantages of his situation, were more nearly on a par with their assailants. The emperor daily led his men to the assault, and Aradas, "*with guns and great stones round,*" as constantly drove them back to their trenches; so that at the end of seven weeks the siege had made no visible progress. But both parties were become tired of the war. The king of Arragon sent an embassy to the imperial camp, to assert his innocence with respect to the death of Sir James, which he was ready to prove either in person, in single combat with the emperor him-

self, or by champions to be chosen by the two parties; and the latter proposal being readily accepted, and a day appointed for the decision of the quarrel, all hostilities were suspended. A giant, of the name of Marradas, was chosen by the emperor; and Aradas sent his messengers in every direction in search of Triamour: but they all returned without success; and the terms of the truce being nearly expired, the unfortunate Aradas prepared to submit to the fate which awaited him from the vengeance of his implacable enemy.

When Triamour was whole and sound,
And well healed of his wound,
He busked him for to fare.
" Mother," he said, with mild cheer,
" An I wist what my father were,
" The less were my care."
" Son," she said, " thou shalt wete
" When thou hast married that lady sweet;
" Thy father thou shalt ken."
" Mother," he said, " if ye will so,
" Have good day; for now I go,
" To do maistries, if I can."

He set off, accompanied by three excellent greyhounds, and wandered from forest to forest,

in chase of wild beasts and of perilous adventures, till he arrived in Arragon, after a toilsome journey, in which his taste for danger and amusement had been amply gratified. Here, being in pursuit of a hart of uncommon size, he was suddenly espied and assaulted by a troop of thirteen well armed foresters. He attempted in vain by remonstrance, and even by bribes, to prevent this interruption of his chase; they insisted on hurrying him to prison for trespassing on the royal forest, and attacked him with such vigour that he was compelled to resistance. He then assaulted them in his turn; killed some; wounded others; put the rest to flight; resumed the pursuit of his greyhounds, two of whom were already gored by the deer; and arrived just in time to rescue the third by shooting the animal while at bay. He then blew his horn, according to custom, in token of success.

Aradas, now hopeless of succour, had retired with his court to a "manor" in this forest, in the hopes of dissipating his chagrin by the pleasures of the chase; and the blast of Triamour's horn was distinctly heard in the hall, where it excited no small degree of astonishment. At the same time arrived a forester "with evil cheer," who reported that an intruder was just arrived in the forest;

had killed one of the king's deer; and had maimed or destroyed a dozen of his game-keepers.

Good king Aradas said than,
" I have much need of such a man!
" God hath him hither brought!"
The king commanded knightes three,
He said, " Go fetch that gentleman to me
" That is now at his play.
" Look, none ill words to him ye break,
" But pray him with me for to speak;
" I trow he will not say nay."
Every knight his steed hent,
And lightly to the wood they went,
To seek Triamour, Triamour that child;
They found him by a water side,
Where he brake the beast that tide,
That hart that was so wild.

The three knights executed their commission with becoming courtesy; and Triamour, having first inquired the name of the country, and of the monarch who governed it, readily consented to accompany them to the hall, where he was received with the most flattering distinction. He instantly recognized, in Aradas, the person to

whose assistance, during his conflict with Sir James, he owed his life; and, on being questioned as to his name and country, courteously reminded the king of this important obligation. Aradas was so overjoyed at finding Triamour, that he swooned three times successively; and then related to him the distresses he had undergone since their last meeting, and the conditions on which he had obtained a truce from the emperor. Triamour, of course, accepted with joy the defence of a cause which he knew to be just; Aradas, full of confidence in the vigour of his champion, was no longer solicitous about the emperor and his giant; and the court of Arragon exhibited, during the short interval which preceded the combat, a continued scene of festivity.

On the morning of this important event, Aradas conferred on Triamour the dignity of knighthood, with which he had not yet been invested, and entreated him to accept the inheritance of all those dominions which he was now preparing to defend. Both the champions were then led into the field with the accustomed solemnities; both attested, in the presence of God, the justice of their cause; and, mounting their horses, expected in silence the signal of attack.

Then rode they together full right,
With sharpe spears, and swordes bright;
They smote together sore:
They spent speares and brake shields;
They pounsed as fowl in the fields;
Either foamed as doth a boar.

The contest was long and obstinate. Triamour having accidentally killed the horse of Sir Marradas, was severely taunted by the giant for his want of address; and, indignantly springing to the ground, renewed the combat on foot. The great strength of Sir Marradas, which was seconded by considerable skill and experience, continued for some hours to render the victory doubtful; and both began to grow faint with fatigue and loss of blood: but at last Sir Triamour, recollecting that he had on that day received the honour of knighthood, suddenly recovered all his powers, and, pressing on his exhausted adversary, pierced him to the heart. The innocence of Aradas was thus finally made manifest; the emperor gave him the kiss of peace, and retired with his army; while Triamour returned in triumph with the king into the capital of Arragon.

Aradas became daily more and more attached to his deliverer, and endeavoured to fix him near his

person by the offer of an immediate participation of the sovereignty; but Triamour, anxious to return into Hungary with as much expedition as the adventures which he hoped to achieve on his way would permit, hastened to depart, after accepting, as the reward of his services, an excellent suit of armour, a sum of money, and the best horse in the royal stable.

No impediment occurred on his journey till he arrived near the frontiers of Hungary, when, on entering a pass in the mountains, he met a palmer, who asked him for alms. Sir Triamour made him a most liberal present; and the pilgrim, in return, earnestly requested him to change his route, which could not but prove fatal to him, as it led to a pass guarded by two giants of unparalleled strength and ferocity. The young knight, hearing that there were only two, rejoiced in the prospect of such an adventure; took leave of the palmer; set spurs to his horse; and gave a shrill blast with his horn, to advertise the enemy of his approach.

The signal was soon answered, and two giants were discovered on a neighbouring eminence, one of whom rode forward, with his lance in arrest, to meet Sir Triamour, while the other remained behind, as disdaining to join in the attack of a single adversary. But astonished at the strength and cou-

rage of Sir Triamour, he suddenly came down to part the combatants, and to inquire the name of the doughty knight. Sir Triamour insisted on first knowing theirs, and they condescended to inform him, "that they were two of four brothers, one of whom was Marradas; that their elder brother Burlong was at that moment besieging the princess of Hungary, the mistress of a certain Triamour, the murderer of Marradas; and that they had occupied that pass in the mountains in the hopes of intercepting this adventurer if he should be bold enough to attempt the rescue of fair Helen by entering the lists with Burlong." Sir Triamour having repaid their courtesy by an equally candid avowal of his name and intentions, was instantly attacked by the two giants, both of whom he killed after an obstinate conflict; and then hastened forwards to the capital of Hungary, which he found blockaded by the army of Burlong.

His arrival was very opportune. The day of combat was arrived; the lists were set; Burlong, armed at all points, had already demanded the champion of Hungary; and the fair Helen could only answer,

——"if Triamour be alive,
"Hither will he come belive:
"God send us grace to speed!"

The giant, confident that his brothers would effectually prevent the arrival of any succour to the princess, anticipated the triumph which a few hours would ensure to him, when an unknown knight, fiercely riding up to him, challenged the lady, and defied him to mortal combat. The lists were instantly cleared; and the princess, observing from her tower the movements in the besieging army, inquired of her attendants if they could recognize the stranger who thus gallantly prepared to expose his life for her deliverance.

A griffon he beareth all of blue:
An herald of arms soon him knew,
And said, anon right,
"Madame, God hath sent you succour,
"For yonder is Sir Triamour
"That with Burlong will fight!"

At the sound of the trumpet the two champions rushed together; shivered their spears; and then, drawing their swords, advanced to closer combat. Victory was long undecided; but Sir Triamour, having aimed at the giant a furious blow which he artfully eluded, unfortunately lost his sword; and the heart of fair Helen sunk within her. The knight himself, not at all intimidated by the acci-

dent, calmly demanded permission to resume his weapon, that the battle might be renewed on equal terms; and Burlong promised his consent, on condition of learning the name of his adversary. But the generosity of giants is seldom commensurate with their stature. On hearing the name of Triamour, Burlong determined to kill him while it was apparently easy to do so; and rushed on the disarmed knight, reproaching him at the same time with the murder of Marradas.

Then said Burlong, "Thou it was
"That slew my brother Maradas;
"A fair hap thee befell!"
Sir Triamour said to him, tho,
"So have I done thy brethren two,
"That on the mountain did dwell."

This avowal, accompanied by a most haughty defiance, exasperated the giant so far, that, summoning his whole strength into a single blow, he attempted to annihilate at once his insolent antagonist. But his foot slipped, and he fell to the ground. Sir Triamour instantly seized the opportunity to resume his sword, and, before Burlong could recover his legs, cut them both off at the knee. Still he continued to fight with great fury,

till Sir Triamour, seizing a moment when the ventail of his helmet was accidentally raised, severed his head from his shoulders.

Now is Burlong slain,
And Triamour, with main,
Into the castle went,
To that lady that was full bright;
And at the gate she met the knight,
And in her arms she him hent.
She said, "Welcome, Sir Triamour!
"Ye have bought my love full dear:
"My heart is on you lent!"
Tho said all the barons bold,
"Of him we will our lands hold;"
And thereto they did assent.

Immediate preparations were made for the nuptials. Margaret was summoned to witness her son's happiness, and revealed to him the story of his birth, to the great joy of fair Helen, who had always hoped to find, in her beloved Triamour, a prince in disguise. Aradas also was invited to the coronation, where he was rewarded for all his past sufferings by the recovery of his faithful Margaret, and by the pleasure of embracing as his son the hero to whom he owed the preservation of his life and kingdom.

And thus we leave of Triamour,
That lived long in great honour,
With the fair Elyne;
I pray God give their souls good rest;
And all that have heard this little gest,
High Heaven for to win!
God grant us all to have the grace,
Him for to see in the celestial place;
I pray you all to say Amen!

THE LYFE OF IPOMYDON.

THIS romance is contained in MS. No. 2252 of the Harleian library in the British Museum. It is perfect, and consisis of two fyttes or cantos, and 2342 verses. Bishop Percy has noticed an early but imperfect printed copy as extant in the library of Lincoln cathedral, Kk. 3. 10.

THE rich and happy country of Apulia was never so rich and happy as during the reign of the good king Hermones, who, says the romance, "hated wrong and loved peace," from a conviction that he might render his neighbours very miserable, without contributing much to the comfort of his subjects. His queen was young and handsome, and in consequence of their joint prayers to heaven, as the author verily believes, had the good fortune to bring him a son and heir, whom they christened by the name of Ipomydon. The child was very beautiful, and much beloved by the king and queen, and by the ladies, who

were appointed to superintend the early part of his education; after which he was delivered into the hands of a foster-father of distinguished merit, named Sir Tholomew.

Tholomew a clerke he toke,
That taught the child upon the boke,
Bothe to synge and to rede;
And after he taught him other dede.
Afterward to serve in halle,
Bothe to grete and to small.
Before the king mete to kerve,
Hye and lowe feyre to serve.
Bothe of howndis and hawkis game
After he taught him, all and same,
In se, in feld, and eke in ryvere;
In wodde to chase the wild dere,
And in the feld to ryde a stede,
That all men had joy of his dede.

Ipomydon had received from nature an athletic but graceful figure; considerable docility, which was increased by his respect for the good Sir Tholomew; and that decision of character which is of infinite use to men born to command: he therefore soon excelled in all manly exercises, insomuch that none could exceed him "in casting

the tree ne the stone," and had the good sense to study the arts of courtesy as much as if he had been unconscious of his superior strength and activity. Hermones was infinitely proud of his accomplished son, and anxious for an opportunity of exhibiting him to a wider circle of admirers than his own court, on common occasions, was able to furnish; for which reason he made unusual preparations for a festival which he usually held at Whitsuntide, and invited numerous guests from the most distant parts of Italy. Nor were his expectations disappointed. Ipomydon did the honours of the entertainment in such a manner as to attract universal admiration; and the female part of the company appeared generally to lament, as our author assures us, that their lords were not so young or so handsome as the heir of Apulia.

When the important business of dining was concluded, the guests dispersed in search of their respective amusements,

> Some to chambre and some to bower,
> And some to the high tower;
> And some in the hall stood,
> And spake what hem thought good;
> Men that were of that cytè
> Enquered of men of other countrè
> Of Calabre land who was king?—

And as Ipomydon had nothing better to do, he joined this inquisitive party.

The reply made to this question was, that the king of Calabria was dead, and had left his throne to an only daughter, who was so very beautiful that her charms mocked all power of description; that, though so exquisitely fair, she was still more remarkable for the extent of her accomplishments; and that although assailed by numerous suitors, many of whom were kings, and some even emperors, she had determined never to bestow her hand but upon a knight who should have proved himself superior in prowess to all the knights in Christendom. Such an account very naturally gave rise to further inquiries, and to much discussion: the perfections of the heiress of Calabria, and her resolutions on the subject of matrimony, became the universal topic of conversation; and Ipomydon, who had hitherto thought little about women, began to think that life would not be worth having if he were not permitted to see the wonderful princess of Calabria.

Sir Tholomew soon perceived in his pupil an air of pensiveness and dejection, which surprised and alarmed him; and, the young man having at length confessed to him the cause of his anxiety, endeavoured to dispel it by observing that

he had no cause to despair; that his personal merit was certainly not inferior to that of his rivals, however numerous they might be; and that the princess could not easily find a more advantageous match than one which should unite the kingdoms of Apulia and Calabria. Ipomydon answered, that his object at present was not to marry a woman whom he had not seen, but to see her and study her character; that he wished to do this in his own way; and that unless he were gratified on this point he should assuredly die. The good-natured tutor, alarmed at this alternative, flew to the king; represented to him that his son, whose education was now perfected, was desirous of visiting foreign countries; and, after urging the reasonableness of the request, offered to accompany the prince on his travels, and to become responsible for his conduct. Having thus obtained the consent of Hermones, he returned with the account of his success to his pupil, who embraced and thanked him; and, after receiving the paternal benediction, selected a small number of attendants and proceeded to execute his project.

He had no sooner begun his march than he issued strict orders to all his retinue to conceal his name and rank, and even the country from

whence he came; at the same time that he did every thing in his power to excite a curiosity which he was determined not to gratify. Himself and Sir Tholomew, on arriving near the castle of the princess, assumed dresses of the utmost magnificence; their robes were new and richly embroidered, and their mantles glittered with precious stones. Having approached the gate,

The porter to them they gan call,
And prayed him, "Go into the hall,
"And say thy lady gent and free,
"That comen are men of far contrée,
"And, if it please her, we would her pray
"That we might eat with her to-day."

The porter, having carried this message, presently returned with a gracious answer, and the strangers were ushered into the hall, where the princess had just taken her seat at table.

Ipomydon, advancing to the lady, fell on his knees before her, and related the object of his journey:

"I am come from far land;
"For speech I hear before the hand

" That your nurture and your service
" Is holden of so great empryse,
" I pray you that I may dwell here
" Some of your service for to lere."

The lady, during this speech, surveyed the handsome suppliant with the most scrutinizing attention. To fill any office in her court was not, indeed, disgraceful even to persons of the most elevated rank; yet it was unusual to see a petitioner for such offices arrayed with a magnificence which her own treasury could not surpass: she therefore suspected, and the more she surveyed Ipomydon the more was she tempted to cherish the suspicion, that the avowed motive of his arrival was not the real one. She, however, readily consented to grant his request, and proposed to him the offer of cup-bearer, which he gratefully accepted; after which, respectfully saluting all the guests, he took his appointed seat amongst them.

When dinner was ended, and the table (after saying grace) removed, the newly-appointed officer rose and proceeded "*to the buttery*," still arrayed in his superb mantle, which now more than ever attracted the eyes of the spectators, because it was not usual to wear the mantle in performing any office to a superior:

And every man said to other there,
" Will ye see the proud squyere,
" Shall serve my lady of the wine
" In his mantell that is so fine ?"

But Ipomydon had no sooner received the cup from the butler, than by drawing a silken lace he let fall the mantle, and desired him to accept that trifling present; with which the man ran into the hall, and, falling on his knees before the princess, humbly prayed her to assure the noble stranger of his gratitude, for which he could not find any adequate expression.

This act of ostentatious generosity produced in the assembly a general murmur of surprise and admiration, to which Ipomydon was very indifferent; but it also gained him the more valuable friendship of a young squire, named Jason, who was cousin to the princess, and much in her confidence, and did not fail of producing a considerable effect on the heart of the lady herself. His unexampled profusion, contrasted with the perfect simplicity of his deportment, and with his humility in discharging the duties of his office; the obstinate silence of his attendants, and his own apparent fear of revealing his name or rank or country, piqued her curiosity, and occupied her

whole attention. She daily became more and more interested in penetrating the mystery, and at last felt that much of her future happiness would depend on her finding that his birth was equal to her own.

After long thought and deliberation, she devised a scheme which could not fail of throwing some light on the subject of her solicitude. His grace and address, and the friendship with which he had inspired her cousin Jason, were strong presumptions in favour of his nobility; but these were still equivocal: if he was an expert huntsman he must be well-born: she therefore ordered a general hunting party, and determined to watch the conduct of the stranger with unceasing attention.

Ipomydon had brought with him three greyhounds, which had been carefully bred and trained by Sir Tholomew, who now attended his pupil and assisted in managing them.

Ipomydon with his houndes tho
Drew down both buck and doe;
More he took with houndes three
Than all that other company.
Their squyers *undid* her deer
Each man in his own manere.

Ipomydon a deer yede unto,
Full cunningly gan he it undo,
So fair that venyson he gan to dight,
That both him beheld squyer and knight.
The lady looked out of her pavyloun,
And saw him dight the venisoun;
Thereto she had grete daintè,
And so had all that did him see.
*She saw all that he down drew**;
Of hunting she wist he couth enow;
And thought in her heart than,
That he was come of gentil man.

This inference appeared so legitimate, that at the dinner which succeeded the chase she refused to give him the trouble of serving her, and ordered him to sit by her cousin Jason, for the purpose of viewing him more at her ease, and without exciting suspicion. Ipomydon, being perfectly aware that he was no longer quite indifferent to her,

Anon it gave him in this thought,
To look again let would he nought.
Nor no more coward thought he to be
Of his looking, than was she.

* How he dissected and separated the different joints, &c. see Notes to Mr. Scott's Sir Tristram, p. 255.

But this alarmed and displeased her; and wishing to give him an indirect lesson of caution, she affected to have surprised some looks of intelligence between her cousin Jason and one of her damsels, and reproved him for the levity of his conduct, which, she told him, might tend to endanger the fair reputation of the young lady. Ipomydon took the hint, but felt it as an offence:

> Down he looked, and thought great shame
> That Jason bare for him the blame.
> Still he sat; and said no mare;
> He thought to dwell no longer there.

No sooner was dinner over than he approached the princess, thanked her for the honour which she had conferred upon him by accepting his services, and requested her permission to resign his office, and to return into his own country. He then took leave of the whole court, all of whom expressed their regret at his departure, and set off with his attendants, notwithstanding the affectionate remonstrances of his friend Jason, who, after vainly trying to detain him by representing the regret and misery which his absence would occasion to the princess, no less vainly entreated to have the pleasure of accompanying him in his

travels. Ipomydon, as we have seen, was inflexible in all his resolutions. On the present occasion he probably gratified his pride at the expense of his happiness; but his mistress, angry with him because "for a word he went away," but still more angry with herself for uttering that word, was much more to be pitied. She blamed her folly,

That she should such moan make,
For a stranger mannys sake,
That no man ne wist what he was;
But yet she saide oft, "Alas!"

Ipomydon, however, had taken measures to be informed of all that passed at the court of Calabria, and had left a trusty attendant, with orders to bring him immediate intelligence of any event in which the happiness of the princess might be materially interested. He was therefore sufficiently tranquil to take an active share in all the festivities which his father prepared in honour of his return, and particularly in a magnificent tournament, where he gained every prize, and was triumphantly admitted into the order of knighthood.

In the mean time the princess of Calabria, every day less pleased with herself, became every day less solicitous to please her subjects. Her

council, having taken the matter into consideration, waited on her in a body, and requested that she would condescend to take to herself a husband, and gratify her loyal subjects by becoming the mother of a long line of princes. In reply, she thanked them for their excellent advice, and announced to them her intention of remaining in a state of celibacy. The council deliberated upon this answer, and were of opinion that it was light and frivolous; for which reason, renouncing all further discussion with her, they carried their complaints to a neighbouring prince, who was her uncle, and whose name was Meleager. This prince, not being in love, was much more accessible to the excellent reasoning of the Calabrian ministers; and, having promised to obtain the consent of his niece to their request, repaired to her court; and, trusting more to the authority of an uncle than to the novelty of his arguments, soon overpowered her opposition. She only stipulated that the possession of her hand and of the crown of Calabria, instead of being bestowed by her own caprice, or by the wisdom of her council, should be proclaimed as the reward of valour; that a tournament should be announced for the purpose; that a delay of six months should be allowed for the purpose of apprising all who might

be disposed to enter the lists on such an occasion; and that the victor knight, whatever might be his rank, should receive the crown without delay or opposition. To these terms Meleager made no objection, and measures were taken to give all possible publicity to the convention.

The agent of Ipomydon justly concluded that this event was of sufficient importance to justify his return to his master, and hastened with all possible speed to Apulia with the intelligence. The prince immediately ordered Sir Tholomew to prepare for their journey into Calabria; after which

He purveyd him three noble steeds,
And also three noble weeds:
That one was white as any milk;
The trappure of him was white silk.
That other was red; both stiff and stour;
The trappure was of the same colour.
Black then was that other steed;
The same colour was his weed.
Three greyhounds with him he lad,
The best that his father had;
Red, and white, and black they were.
When he was dight in this manere,

With him he took a fair may,
And went forth on his journey,
Into *Seseny** the way they nome.

He then directed Sir Tholomew to enter the city by night; to conceal the armour, the horses, and the hounds, from the view of all persons whatever; and strictly to enforce on all his attendants the same silence which they had observed during their former journey: after which, taking with him only the maiden, he turned back into the forest where he had heard the cry of hounds, and, having accosted a knight, was informed by him that it was Meleager, the king of the country, who was then hunting. Ipomydon rode up to him, and, after the usual salutations, requested service in his court; which having been consented to by Meleager, he proceeded to modify his request by the following singular stipulations:

Ipomydon said, "I shall you tell,
"At this covenant would I dwell,
"Full fain I would be ready boun,
"To lead your queen, both up and down,

* It is difficult to guess what country adjoining to Naples can be intended by this word, which generally means Saxony.

" Fro her chamber to her hall,
" And my leman I would her call.
" My maiden, that is of honoùr,
" Shall dwell in the queenys bower,
" At every turn that I her lead,
" A kiss of the queen shall be my meed;
" I will no more for my service."

Meleager surveyed him with some surprise; but justly concluding, from this strange proposal and from the splendour of his appearance, that the stranger knight was a man of great opulence, who wished to reside at his court for some mysterious reason, and not with any view to seduce the queen, replied that he accepted the bargain; and, the chase being concluded, conducted the new chamberlain to her majesty, who saw nothing in the person of Ipomydon which could lead her to refuse the whimsical salary annexed to his service. Thus was he naturally placed on a footing of familiarity with the royal couple, which he well knew how to improve; and his wealth and generosity soon secured the affection of their courtiers, so that he shortly became the universal favourite.

But the important tournament now approached. Meleager himself was a knight of no common prowess; and he had two companions, Sir Campanys and Sir Camys, who had acquired a bril-

liant reputation by their feats of arms. The greatness of the prize for which numberless warriors were about to contend, the charms of the heiress of Calabria, the extent and population of her dominions, and the mighty preparations excited in every part of Italy, were the constant theme of their conversation, whilst Ipomydon alone seemed to consider the universal bustle with apathy or with contempt. Meleager, lost in astonishment at his behaviour, at length formally proposed to him that he should prepare to enter the lists, at the same time adding, with a smile, that a young knight of his apparent strength and activity was perhaps justified in hoping to bear away the prize with little effort. But Ipomydon humbly answered, that "he had no wish but to serve the queen with proper decorum and assiduity; and that the boisterous amusements of a tournament, to which he was not accustomed, did not seem to him worth pursuing, to the neglect of more pleasing and important duties." Meleager turned from him with a mixture of pity and contempt, and lamented, as did his two hardy companions, that the many accomplishments of the amiable Ipomydon should be tarnished by the degrading stain of cowardice.

On the evening that preceded the ceremony, Ipomydon repaired to the queen and begged a

boon. "It is a long time," said he, "since my hounds have been fleshed; and I should be glad to run them at some deer to-morrow, whilst my lord is occupied at the tournament. Your majesty will, I hope, hold me excused, should my sport detain me in the field beyond the usual hour of dinner." The queen having readily assented, he sent for Sir Tholomew, and directed him to bring to the castle, before day-break, the white steed, the white greyhound, and the white armour. He then obtained from the porter the key of the castle, rose before dawn, sounded his horn under the windows, laced on his armour, vaulted into the saddle, and, after requesting Sir Tholomew to hunt his greyhound during his absence, and to convey the game which he should collect to an appointed spot in the forest, set spurs to his horse and rode to a hermitage on the edge of a wood, from whence he could discern all that passed in the lists.

In the mean time, the loud blasts of his horn had awakened all the maidens in the castle, so that, when called to attend the queen, they thought it necessary to compliment her majesty on the military ardour which had so suddenly inflamed her handsome leman; adding, that they hoped soon to hail his return as victor from the

tournament, and that they sincerely forgave his having awakened them so early by a very noisy prelude to his great achievements. The queen answered drily, "that though unfit for tournaments, her leman was perhaps as rationally employed;" and the maidens, abashed at finding their congratulations so unwelcome, held their peace, but seemed to lament, as Meleager had done, that the handsome knight was a coward.

The handsome knight, however, was very busily employed. Having reached the hermitage,

> He looked forth and beheld;
> Many a knight he saw in field;
> Each to other fast gan ride,
> With great spears on either side.
> He took his spear, anon right,
> And lepte on his steed so light;
> In he came among hem alle,
> Through the clouds as he had falle.

The rapidity of his charge was irresistible; knight after knight was unhorsed by him; and the lady, who surveyed the combat from her bower, and had witnessed many alternations of success and defeat in the motions of the opposite

squadrons, beheld with astonishment this white figure, which seemed to pass through the ranks like a spectre, unchecked in its career, and bearing down without effort all opposition. At the conclusion of the justs, every voice proclaimed that the white knight was the victor; and Jason, who, as the queen's favourite squire, had been employed throughout the day in carrying spears to the combatants, now courteously requested him, by her command, to repose himself in the castle, which would doubtless become, within three days, the reward of his prowess. Ipomydon, discovering himself to his old companion, replied, "Commend me to my lady; say that thus much I have done for her, but that, compelled by painful necessity, I must now away to my own country." At these words he set spurs to his horse and disappeared. Jason, much grieved at the loss of his friend, conveyed the message to the lady, who swooned with vexation, tore her hair, bitterly reproached herself for her folly, and would have put an end to her life, but that she still entertained a secret hope that the "strange squyere," whatever might be his avocations, would again make his appearance on the succeeding day.

Ipomydon now hastened to the place at which he had appointed Sir Tholomew to meet him,

delivered to him his horse and armour, received from him in return a plentiful supply of venison, which the white greyhound had pulled down in the course of the day, and repaired with it to the castle of Meleager. The game was displayed with much ostentation, and after supping most voraciously, he exclaimed, with an air of triumph, that he had sped much better at his chase than the king his master at the tournament. Soon after this a messenger, dispatched by Meleager, brought an account of the wonderful feats of arms achieved by the white knight; to which Ipomydon replied by an account of the exploits of his white greyhound, whom he pronounced to be superior in strength and swiftness to any in the possession of his majesty, and requested that he might have leave to send some choice pieces of venison as a proof of his veracity. The queen and all her court were marvellously pleased with this sally, and they almost began to doubt whether the knight's want of courage was not compensated by his excellent talent for buffoonery.

The next day exhibited a repetition of nearly the same scene, excepting that Ipomydon was mounted on a bay horse, and clad in red armour. Having recognised his friend Jason, who had on that morning been knighted, and took his share in

the medley, he enabled him to *gain his spurs* with great distinction; leaving the young knight to repell the attacks of common adversaries, but taking to himself all those who from their superior strength and skill might have stopped his career of glory. The address with which he performed this difficult task was so conspicuous, that the red knight was thought to have eclipsed the glory of the white. Again he was solicited by Jason to retire to the castle: "For," said his friend,

"I wote thou shalt be lord here,
"For I know none that is thy peer,
"Save, yesterday, the white knight;
"But he is out of land y-dight!"

"Nay, Jason, my true fere,
"Thou shalt see that I am here,
"But greet well my lady dear,
"For her to-day have I been here.
"The which, I say, withouten fail,
"Will me turn to great travayl;
"And many a horse shall I ride to *dede**
"Ere I come there that me must need!
"For all my land I lose for aye,
"But I be there by a certain day!"

* death.

This speech was followed, as on the day before, by tender remonstrances on the part of Jason, by obstinacy on the part of Ipomydon, and by the bitter lamentations of his mistress. The knight also repeated with equal success his old joke, saying to Meleager's messenger,

"Commend me to my lord so dear,
"And say that GAGER my red greyhound
"Much deer hath brought this day to ground;
"I had more joy at his running
"Than to stand and stare and see the justing!"

The third day, which was to decide the fate of the princess of Calabria, called forth, of course, all the mightiest combatants. Ipomydon, still appearing to amuse himself with the chase, again repaired to the hermitage, from which he issued on a black steed, and clad in black armour. His first adversary was a champion of great strength dressed in red armour, who was mistaken by the princess, and by all the spectators, for the victor of the preceding day; but Ipomydon instantly brought him to the ground, and, seizing his horse, led it off in triumph to the extremity of the lists. He next assaulted Sir Camys, and was equally successful. Sir Campanys was a more formidable

adversary, and at their first shock both knights shattered their spears without effect; but the second gave the victory to Ipomydon. Meleager, incensed at the defeat of his two companions, spurred forward to revenge them, and, attacking the unknown knight from behind, wounded him in the left arm; upon which turning round he courteously said,

"As thou art kind, gentil, and free,
"Abide and just a course with me,
"And I forgive this vilainye."
The king said, "Thereto grant I."

The result was, that his majesty's horse was presently led off to keep company with those of the red knight, of Camys, and of Campanys; and, there being no more competitors capable of contesting the prize, it was finally adjudged to the black knight.

Jason, to whom he again revealed himself, was more disappointed than ever at being unable to induce him to take possession of a kingdom which he had gained, and to console a beauty who adored him, and whom his absence would reduce to despair; but his remonstrances were still in vain; Ipomydon disappeared, and returned, as before, to

the castle of Meleager with the prey acquired by his black greyhound. For the third time, also, he repeated his injunctions to the messenger to convey his respects to the king,

" And say, 'my black greyhound Gilmyn
" Today hath borne him well and fine;
" For he hath take many a beast
" The greatest that was in the forest."

But whilst he was carving the venison, the wound in his arm suddenly opened, and bled so plentifully as to alarm the tenderness of the queen, to whom he thus related the supposed cause of his hurt:

" Forsooth, madam, I shall you say;
" I let run at a deer to day,
" My palfrey I pricked after so fast,
" That he stumbled, and me down cast.
" At that time I took this harm:
" A stub smote me through the arm,
" And that was, for I should say
" The *gree** of the field I had to day."
So they laughed at him that night,
That some might not sit upright.

* the first rank.

The queen now requested that he would accompany her on the following day to the ceremony of *challenging the prize*; but he answered, that having absented himself from the lists, he did not wish to attend the subsequent challenge; and that, besides, he had just received some advices from home which compelled him, after thanking her majesty for all her kindness, to solicit her permission to depart. This separation from her *leman* was very painful to the queen, who spared no pains to induce him to stay; but he was, as usual, inflexible, and, taking with him the maiden whom he had brought, repaired to his inn in the city, sent for his host, and gave him his final directions about his horses. "I am," said he, "the person who appeared at the late tournament in the successive characters of the white, the red, and the black knight, and who won, on the last day, the four steeds which you see before you. My wish is that you go to the challenging, that you place on this my white horse a person clad in my white armour, and that you publicly present both horse and armour to king Meleager, telling him that his own knight, the queen's leman, humbly offers him this present, and wishes that every hair of the horse were of gold or silver, that it might be more worthy of his accep-

tance. My bay horse and red armour you will present to the queen his wife, my noble mistress, with a similar message. The black horse, with the appropriate armour, I send to Sir Campanys, the bravest of my competitors in the tournament. The king's own horse you will present to the heiress of Calabria, and that of Sir Campanys to her cousin Jason. I beg you to accept for yourself the horse of the other red knight, which you will ride to the ceremony." After repeating several times the precise words in which he wished the several messages to be delivered, he bestowed a magnificent reward on his host, and departed.

All the noble persons to whom these presents were directed, accepted them with gratitude, and expressed their admiration for the eccentric but truly heroic character, who seemed equally eager to court danger and to escape from that renown which is the usual incentive to enterprise. But there was one of his antagonists to whom he had sent no present, and whose horse he had reserved for his own use: this was Sir Camys; and he could not have easily found a knight of more arrogance, or more disposed to be affronted, than the person whom he distinguished by this mortifying omission. But not wishing to avow the real cause of his indignation, Sir Camys pretended to

be angry with the knight for departing against the wishes of the queen, and swore to bring him back either by persuasion or by force.

Ipomydon had been so thoroughly fatigued by the exertions of the last three days, that he was unable to travel with much expedition; and he had advanced but a little way into the forest, when, stopping his attendants and declaring that he must refresh himself by a short repose, he dismounted, laid his head on his maiden's lap, and almost instantly fell asleep. But he had not rested above a quarter of an hour, when the maiden was alarmed by the appearance of a knight armed at all points, who approached them at full speed, and appeared determined to prevent their further progress. She hastily wakened her lord, and he was doing his best to shake off his slumber, when Sir Camys thus addressed him:

"Traitour! thou diddest dishonour,
"When thou brakest the queenys bower,
"And toke her maiden and my stede!
"Again to court I will thee lead.
"Arise, Traitour! I bid thee;
"To court thou shalt again with me."

Ipomydon answered this brutal speech in terms

of the greatest courtesy; but gave Sir Camys to understand that he was naturally disinclined to do any thing on compulsion; that he could not return to court because his journey lay in an opposite direction; that if he were less sleepy he should be in a great hurry; and that it would be barbarous to carry an altercation any further with a man who had so little leisure to dispute the point. The moderation of the drowsy knight had, however, no effect on his angry antagonist. He therefore rubbed his eyes, laid hold of his spear, mounted his horse, took his distance, charged Sir Camys at full speed, and threw him over the crupper of his horse with such violence that his arm was broken in the fall. He then ordered his attendants to seize his steed; to mount him on the worst sumpter horse in their troop, with his face to the animal's tail, and his hands tied behind him; and to escort him back to the court, which was at no great distance, where his reception might possibly cure him of his arrogance. Having given these summary orders, our knight again went to sleep, and met with no second interruption.

The unfortunate Sir Camys, bursting with vexation, writhing with pain from his broken arm, and not a little annoyed by the retrograde

mode of travelling which he now tried for the first time, passed through the shouting multitudes who filled the streets of the city to the castle-gate, where he was immediately admitted by the porter, and then conducted by Sir Jason, who held the horse's bridle, through the great hall, where the whole court was assembled, to Meleager, who with great gravity requested him to relate all the circumstances of his adventure. The humbled knight, compelled to obey the orders of his sovereign, and to become the historian of his own disgrace, could now find no refuge for his vanity but in exaggerating the invincible force of his antagonist—

" Though all the knightes in the hall
" Come to him, both great and small,
" He would of them give no thing,
" But if it were of you, Sir king !"
Then they *loughe* all *insame* *,
And at his harm had good game.
There was none in that place
But they were glad of that case.
Thus Camys hath his service quit,
And of Ipomydon here is a fytte.

* laughed all together.

CANTO II.

IPOMYDON, continuing his journey, was met by a deputation of his people who had been long in search of him, and who notified to him the death of his good father king Hermones. He therefore hastened his march; and, having made a rapid progress through his dominions to receive the oaths of fealty from his subjects, evinced his filial piety by ordering a magnificent funeral for his father, causing numberless masses to be sung in all the churches, and distributing alms to the poor in such abundance, as to prove that he inherited the virtues together with the power of his excellent predecessor.

The next object of his attention was the queen his mother, who found, in the kind and dutiful demeanour of her son, the best compensation that could be afforded to her for the loss of an affectionate husband, and repaid him by the most unbounded confidence. Here it may be proper to observe that, during the turbulent ages in which this history is placed, the persons of young and beautiful females were often exposed to manifold hazards, so that the reader must not be scandalised by the discovery, that the tender mother of

Ipomydon had afforded an example of such casualties.

——— it befell upon a day
The queen to her son gan say,
In privity, and in counsail,
" Thou hast a brother, withouten fail,
" Privily gotten me upon,
" Ere I was wedded to any mon.
" But hastily he was done fro me,
" I ne wot if he alive be.
" But he me sent, this ender-year,
" A rich ring of gold full clear;
" An ever he any brother had,
" That I should give it him, he bade;
" That where he come, among high or low,
" By that ring he should him know.
" Then take this ring, my son, of me;
" In what country that he be,
" Who that knoweth this ilke ring,
" He is thy brother, without lesing!"

Ipomydon accepted the ring, and promised to spare no pains in searching for its original proprietor.

Soon after this, the principal barons of Apulia proposed to him that he should issue orders for

bis coronation; but this he declined for the present, and satisfied himself with appointing as his lieutenant his uncle, Sir Piers of Apulia, a knight of a middle age, of approved valour, and distinguished by an inflexible love of justice. With regard to himself, he modestly said that he had not yet sufficiently proved his prowess; but in fact he wished to be disengaged for the purpose of going in quest of his brother, after having previously rescued the heiress of Calabria, who was now in greater danger than ever.

A duke dwelleth Calabre beside,
A stout man and of great pride.
He was mighty and of great powere:
Men dreaded him both far and near;
His name was duke Geron;
Of Sesseny land he was baron:

This formidable duke had convinced himself that the possession of the beautiful heiress of Calabria would add much to his pleasures, and that her ample territory would form a very agreeable addition to his dominions; for which reason he had signified to the lady his intention of marrying her, if she chose to accept his hand, or of destroying every man, woman, and child in Ca-

labria if she rejected his offer. From his mode of courtship we may infer that he did not think his person very seducing; and the lady, who had some reasons for believing her lover to be the bravest as well as the handsomest knight in the world, dismissed the duke's ambassadors with a most contemptuous refusal, and prepared to defend herself as well as she could; while her ferocious suitor collected a formidable army, and prepared to carry his threats into immediate execution. Such was the state of affairs, as reported to Ipomydon by the emissary whom he had again left behind him after his last expedition to Calabria.

Instead of preparing to meet his rival with the military armaments of a mighty monarch, our hero had recourse to one of his usual devices:

Right unseemly, in quaint manere,
He him dight as ye shall hear.
A barber he called, withouten more,
And shave him, both behind and before,
Quaintly indented, out and in;
And also he shore half his chin:
He seemed a fool, that quaint sire,
Both by head and by attire.

Armour he took that was rustye,
And horsed him on an old rouncy;
An helm as black as any pan;
A crooked spear he took him than.
When that he was thus dight,
He seemed ill a doughty knight.

Thus fantastically accoutred, he set off alone to the court of Meleager, suddenly burst into the hall with the gestures of a madman, and with apparent awkwardness shivered his spear so that the splinters were scattered upon the table. Both king and queen were delighted at the arrival of this whimsical and unexpected visitor. "Fool, go to meat," was the hospitable exclamation of both; but the fool would not sit down to table till he had exacted, as a boon, that he should be permitted to take the first adventure which should offer. A request apparently so unimportant was granted without difficulty, and the guests were in expectation of receiving infinite amusement from their fool, when a damsel mounted on a white mule, and accompanied by a dwarf, entered the hall and rode up to Meleager.

This damsel was an envoy from the princess of Calabria, who sent her to request the aid of her uncle against the odious duke Geron, who had

found little difficulty in dissipating the effeminate troops of Calabria, and now actually besieged her in her citadel. Meleager replied, that Sir Campanys, whom alone he could have trusted as a champion capable of facing the redoubtable Geron, was now absent, with all his best knights, on a distant expedition, and that he had no one calculated to undertake the adventure. At this instant the fool started up, and claimed the king's promise; and though the damsel indignantly disclaimed such an assistant, he persevered in asserting his right, and declared himself ready to fight Sir Geron. She turned away and departed; but the fool soon overtook her, and became her faithful though unwelcome companion. She ordered the dwarf to pitch her tent; she took her repast with him, but would not offer a morsel to the fool: fortunately the fool had dined, and paid no attention to her discourse. But her dinner was shortly interrupted by a still more disagreeable visitant. One of duke Geron's warriors rode up to the tent, hailed the damsel as his mistress, and without further ceremony proceeded to treat her as such. It should seem that the duke himself being an enemy to much form on such occasions, all his followers had abridged as much as possible the minutiæ of courtship. But the fool inter-

fered; and, after a short verbal altercation, seized a piece of a tent-pole, laid the knight with one blow dead at his feet, and bestowed upon the dwarf his horse and armour, reserving only his enemy's spear, which seemed to be a strong one, for some future occasion.

They then resumed their journey; but at their next resting-place were assaulted by a second adventurer, as amorous as the former, but not more fortunate. Being compelled to just with the fool before he could obtain possession of the lady, he was pierced through the heart by the spear of his apparently contemptible adversary, and his spoils were again given to the dwarf, who began to think that madness and great military skill were more compatible than he had hitherto imagined.

Again they resumed their journey; and, travelling till near the close of evening, pitched their tent, and hoped to escape all further interruption; but they were disappointed.

Right as they sat and made them glad,
There came a knight, as the devil him bade;
He was the duke's brother Geron;
All was black that he had on,
Both his horse and his weed:
To the maid he gan him speed,

And said, " Sithe I find you here,
" Ye shall be my leman dear."
The fool said, " Nay, not so,
" Another she hath ta'en her to;
" That am I that thou seest here;
" If thou her buy, she is too dear."
" Fool," he said, " thou *bourdest grete**;
" With my spear I shall thee beat;
" Her time foully hath she sped
" If she should lie with thee in bed!"
The fool said, " Twice I have her bought;
" With thy chiding thou gettest her nought:
" If thou her have, thou must her buy
" A penny dearer than ever did I."
There was no longer to abide,
But either of them to other gan ride;
The fool met the knight so
That his back brast on two.
With that stroke he him slew,
And his armour off he drew;
Anon he took the knight's steed,
And armed him in his weed.

This change of armour produced such a difference in his whole appearance, that the damsel, in whom his astonishing strength and activity had al-

* mocked much.

ready excited some suspicions, examined him again with great attention, and at length convinced herself that he could be no other than the *strange squire.* She now lamented the discourtesy with which she had hitherto treated him, and wished to make amends by an excess of kindness. They all retired early to rest; and the dwarf, without loss of time, began to snore; at which signal the damsel rose, and approaching the knight, made him a very unexpected and unreserved declaration of love, adding that, though in the service of the princess of Calabria, she was not less nobly born, scarcely less rich, equally handsome, and of a more affectionate disposition than that lady, for whom he had suffered so much; and ready to accompany him in all his fortunes, without giving him the trouble of killing any more dukes or knights for her sake. But the knight, who had assumed the disguise of a madman for his own purposes, was not disposed to forgo so suddenly the privileges of his character. Feigning to be plagued by a disagreeable dream, he began to gesticulate with such violence, whilst he uttered the most incoherent ejaculations, that the love-sick damsel, after receiving a few bruises from his elbows, and narrowly escaping a violent

contusion on her nose, was compelled to abandon her purpose and leave him to his slumbers.

As it was necessary, for the purpose of returning to the citadel undiscovered, that she should set off before day-break, she took leave of the knight after inquiring whether he was still disposed to fulfil his promise to Meleager, and undertake the battle; to which he answered, still in his assumed character, that he possibly might, but that after surveying Duke Geron in the morning he should determine whether he liked his looks. This doubtful message, therefore, she conveyed to the princess, who, deriving little consolation from it, now employed herself in accelerating the preparations which she had made for her escape from a citadel which she was no longer able to defend.

Duke Geron, aware that his success depended very much on his availing himself of the general alarm which the rapidity of his inroad had inspired, and that the allies of the princess might in a short time come to her assistance, in such numbers as to compel him to raise the siege, spared no pains to intimidate the garrison into a speedy surrender. He had advanced to the gate of the citadel, and had threatened all its inhabitants with indiscriminate massacre, unless the

princess were delivered to him or a champion sent out to combat him in the field, when he discovered a knight, whom he mistook for his brother, advancing towards him, and suddenly heard himself addressed by a voice to which he was a perfect stranger, and in a tone by no means fraternal.

" What art thou that makest this cry,
" And at this gate so great *mastrye?*"
" I am," he said, " lord of here in;
" For I am seky this maid to win,
" And will do so ere I hence gon;
" That other husband getteth she none!"
Ipomydon said, " That thou shalt miss,
" For all mine own that lady is,
" And full long she hath be so;
" Therefore, I rede thee, hence go!
" I will her defend from all men."
The duke answered bitterly then.
" Traitour!" he said, " thou art another;
" I weened thou haddest been my brother:
" His steed thou hast, his armour lo;
" Thou hast him slain I trow also."
" That I him slew I gainsay nought;
" Thee so to serve have I thought."

With that word, withouten lie,
Fast together gan they hie,
That their speares all to-brast;
They drew their swerdes and fought fast.
The lady lay in a high tower,
And saw between them all the stour;
But she ne wist which for her did fight,
For they in like weed were dight.

We have seen that Geron himself had mistaken his antagonist for his brother; and the princess, very naturally supposing that the odious duke was the most formidable knight in the world, excepting the strange squire her lover, no less naturally concluded, when either knight appeared to gain a visible advantage, that he was Geron. Ipomydon, however, though he had never before encountered such a formidable adversary, obtained at length a decided superiority; and Geron, staggering under the weight of a blow which his helmet had resisted, but which had nearly dislocated his neck, sued for mercy, promised to evacuate Calabria, to repay all the damages occasioned by his troops, to become the vassal of his conqueror, and to yield him an annual tribute of a thousand pounds of gold. Promises of this kind were held so sacred by the laws of chivalry, that

Ipomydon, after assenting to the conditions, hastened to the gate of the citadel, where he expected to be received with open arms, and was much surprised at finding that neither threats nor intreaties could obtain him admittance. In fact his mistress was no longer there.

Beside the castle where in was the *eyre**,
Renneth a river long and fair,
With shippes and sayles manifold,
Their *foremes* † were of fine gold, &c.

In short, prepossessed that the victor knight must be the tyrant whom she dreaded, she had escaped at one gate when her defender approached the other, had embarked without delay, and was hastening down the river as fast as her sails, her oars, and the current could carry her, whilst Ipomydon was vainly remonstrating with the keepers of the gate, who, having heard from their mistress that he must be duke Geron, were determined to believe that he could be no other person, and were confirmed in their obstinacy by observing the departure of the hostile army, without whose aid it was obviously impossible that he should force an entrance.

* heiress.

† Forms or images? statues were used to decorate not only the heads, but the sterns of ships also, and were usually gilded.

Fortunately, while the princess was retreating so precipitately down the river, Sir Campanys and the rest of her uncle's knights were marching along its banks to her assistance. They hailed the vessels, and with some difficulty obtained a parley, in which the frightened princess gave them the best information in her power concerning the adventures of her damsel and the fool, and concerning the combat in which one of the knights had been victorious, and respecting her flight, which she had valiantly deferred till the very last moment. Sir Campanys, who was not at all frightened, could not help remarking to her a circumstance in her narrative which required further explanation; namely, that being in possession of a strong castle, defended by a numerous garrison, she had at length fled from it on the approach of a single knight. He therefore conjured her to return, and promised to clear up the mystery, and even to bring her the head of Geron, if it should appear that he had been the victor in the late combat.

The lady now consented to go back; but, on approaching the castle, kept her vessels in the middle of the river, whilst Sir Campanys and his knights rode forward to the gate, where they be-

held a knight whose armour led them to think that the fears of the princess were well founded.

Sir Campanys said in this manere;—
" What art thou that standest here ?
" Tell me why thou makest this din,
" And what thou wouldest have herein ?"
He said, " My leman that I wan;
" I will not leave her for no man !"

Sir Campanys now insisted on his retiring immediately, on pain of being treated like a common robber, and attacked by himself and all his friends at the same time. Ipomydon was completely confounded by this unexpected outrage, and almost fancied himself in a dream; but at length, seeing that Campanys prepared to carry his threats into execution, drew his sword, set his back against a buttress of the wall, and defended himself with such vigour as to keep his assailants at bay, till one of his gauntlets being chopped off, he was forced to grasp his sword in his naked hand, on which was displayed the ring presented to him by his mother.

This sight operated like a talisman upon Sir Campanys, who instantly dropped the point of his

sword and demanded a parley, to the great relief of all the combatants, who were by this time exceedingly tired, and after some difficulty in adjusting a point of great importance in chivalry, namely, the right of putting the first question, they at length came to an explanation, by which it appeared that Sir Campanys was the long lost brother of Ipomydon, and that Ipomydon was the strange squire; the white, red, and black knight; the chamberlain of Meleager's queen; the fool; and the reputed brother of Duke Geron.

With this stock of important intelligence the knights repaired to the river-side; and, though unable to communicate, at such a distance, a very circumstantial account of what had passed, contrived, by the joint aid of bawling and of gesticulation, to explain that they were the bearers of very good news, and that it related to the "strange squire." The princess, now cured of her fears, ordered out a boat, threw herself into it, urged the mariners to convey her with the utmost possible dispatch, and seeing her lover on the bank,

> She leaped out of the boat, on hie,
> Into the water that he stood by;
> And he in after, wonder fast,
> That up he gat her at the last.

When they come unto the lond,
Ipomydon took her by the hond,
And told her there, withouten fail,
Her love had caused him great travail, &c.

He then related very modestly and succinctly his various exploits, to which she listened with delight and attention, and abstained from swooning with pleasure till he had concluded his whole narrative; after which, and a great deal of kissing and embracing, attended with more joy than the author of the romance will undertake to describe, they repaired together to the castle, and sent out "letters of great noblay" to king Meleager, to the emperor, to Sir Piers of Apulia, and to all the archbishops, bishops and nobles of the adjoining country, to attend the solemnization of their nuptials. This splendid assembly being convened,

On the morrow, when it was day,
They busked them, as I you say,
Toward the church, with game and glee,
To make that great solempnitè.
The arch-bishop of that land
Wedded them, I understand.
When it was done, as I you say,
Home they went without delay.

By that they come to the castel,
Their meat was ready every deal.
Trumpes to meat gan blow tho,
Claryons and other minstrels mo.
Tho they washed and went to meat,
And every lord took his seat.
When they were set, all the rout,
Minstrels blew them all about,
Till they were served with pride,
Of the first course that tide.
The service was of great array,
That they were served with that day.
Thus they ate, and made them glad,
With such service as they had.
When they had dined, as I you say,
Lordis and ladies yede to play;
Some to tables, and some to chess,
With other games more and less.

To conclude, Ipomydon distributed, at the end of the festival, considerable largesses to the minstrels and others, who had assisted in amusing the company; and bestowed on his brother Sir Campanys the investiture of Apulia, with the reserve of a single earldom, which was alienated in favour of Sir Tholomew: he also conferred on his

respectable and apparently aged foster-father "a maiden his lief to be;" and, with more seeming propriety, gave the hand of another maiden, together with the island of Crete as a marriage portion, to his young friend and companion Sir Jason. These acts of generosity maintained and increased the reputation which he had already acquired; and the remainder of his life was spent in tranquillity and happiness.

SIR EGLAMOUR

OF

ARTOYS.

THE following abstract is taken from Garrick's Plays, K. 10, which was printed "at London in Foster lane, at the sygne of the Hartes horne, by John Walley." Another printed copy is preserved in the Bodleian. There are three MSS. copies of this romance, one of which is in the Cotton library, Calig. A. 12; another in the public library Cambridge, No. 690; and a third in Bishop Percy's folio.

The writer tells us in the last stanza, that "in romaunce this chronicle is;" so that Mr. Ritson can have had no good reason to doubt its being a translation, merely because the French original has not yet been discovered. The same remark will apply to Sir Tryamour.—It contains 214 stanzas of six lines.

At the time when the county of Artois, since incorporated with France, was governed by its native sovereigns, there reigned there a count named Sir Prinsamour, whose court, though neither so magnificent nor so numerous as those of more powerful monarchs, afforded an excellent seminary for the instruction of youth in the courtesy and accomplishments of chivalry. Prinsamour had a daughter named Crystabell, the intended heiress of his dominions, of whose beauty and accomplishments he was deservedly proud, and whom he hoped to place on one of the principal thrones in Europe. But Crystabell was not ambitious. Educated in her father's court, she was naturally partial to its inhabitants, and among these there was a young knight to whom she was more partial than to the rest, either because he was handsomer, or because at the numerous tournaments which Prinsamour had ordered to be proclaimed in her name, and which had drawn together a large concourse of strangers, he had uniformly been victorious. He was a native of her father's dominions, and his name was Sir Eglamour.

The young knight, on his part, had always heard that Crystabell was the most charming of her sex; and he had no sooner beheld her than he became

more confirmed in this opinion. To please her had been, from this moment, the great object of his life; with this purpose always in his view, he had made such a progress in the exercises of chivalry as to be considered nearly invincible; and his superiority was viewed without envy, because his prowess, generally manifested at the expense of strangers, cast a reflected lustre on all the knights of Artois.

By degrees the princess had acquired the habit of considering him as "her knight;" and others had insensibly given him the same appellation, which, though apparently unimportant, because he was her father's subject, was infinitely grateful to him, and naturally led to that sort of familiarity which enabled him to discover that he was not considered with indifference by his mistress.

Having proceeded thus far, he naturally wished to advance a step further, and to obtain the advice and assistance of a confident. He therefore had recourse to his trusty chamberlain; but the chamberlain gave him no encouragement. He observed that,

"The man that heweth over-high,
"Some chip falleth in his eye;"

and that a simple knight, with no property but

that which he had acquired by his sword, and without an acre of territory, could not, without madness, pretend to the hand of a princess whose father, however fond of her and desirous of promoting her happiness, was still more anxious for her further elevation.

Eglamour sighed and said no mair,
But to his chamber gan he fare,
That richely was wrought;
To God his hands he held up soon;
"*Lord!*" *he said,* "*grant me a boon,*
"*As thou on rood me bought!*
"The erle's daughter, fair and free,
"That she may my wife be!
"For she is most in my thought:
"That I may wed her to my wife,
"And in joy to lead our life!
"From care then were I brought."

It was with perfect simplicity and sincerity of heart, that the good knight addressed his Creator in the same terms which he would have employed to solicit a favour from a feudal superior; and he evinced at least the extent of his care and anxiety, by fretting himself into a violent fever, which disabled him from appearing the next day at the table

of his sovereign. His absence of course was noticed by the princess, who anxiously inquired after the health of "her knight;" and who, we may suppose, was not a little pleased at the positive injunction which she received from her father, to repair immediately after dinner to the chamber of Sir Eglamour, and to examine the nature of his malady. Perhaps too she was not much displeased at receiving from the sick man a formal declaration of his passion, to which she listened with much patience, and answered, that if he could obtain the consent of the parent whom it was her duty to obey, she should feel no disinclination to such a marriage.

Sir Eglamour was restored to new life by this favourable answer. He bestowed a magnificent present on the two damsels who accompanied his mistress, and was rewarded for his generosity by a kiss from her lips, and by an avowal of her affection, after which she repaired to the count, and informed him that the knight was so far recovered as to be able to hunt on the following day; and Prinsamour, rejoiced at this sudden and unexpected cure, declared his resolution of accompanying the knight in his diversion.

In returning from this chase Sir Eglamour ventured to make his proposal, to the great surprise of

the count, who had not hitherto suspected the secret motive which had induced his daughter to reject with scorn the addresses of all other suitors, and now ardently wished to procure the destruction of the young knight, who, whilst he lived, could not fail of disappointing all the expectations which he had founded on the advantageous marriage of Crystabell. He however dissembled his indignation, and calmly replied, that the possessor of his daughter must purchase her by accomplishing three several feats of arms, each of which would expose the candidate for her hand to the most imminent danger, but that the reward of success would be not only the hand of Crystabell but the immediate possession of the whole territory of Artois. Sir Eglamour was transported with joy. He only was impatient to be informed of the achievement which he was required in the first instance to accomplish, and declared that he would be ready to set off on the following day.

"There is," said the count, "at a short distance to the westward, a forest of noble trees belonging to a most terrible giant named Sir Maroke. In a part of this forest which is inclosed with a lofty wall, and more particularly reserved for his amusements, are three harts remarkable for their transcendent size and swiftness. To determine on

chasing one of these animals is to undertake a single combat with the dreadful Sir Maroke. Consider whether you have firmness enough for such an enterprise." Sir Eglamour did not hesitate, but having promised to kill the giant, hastened to his mistress, and with transports of joy informed her of what had passed.

" Good sir," she said, " be merry and glad!
" For a worse journée ye never had,
" In no Christian countrè!
" Sir, if you be on hunting found,
" I shall you give a good greyhound,
" That is dun as a doe;
" For as I am a true gentilwomàn,
" There was never deer that he at ran,
" That might scape him fro.
" Also a swerde I give thee,
" That was found in the sea,
" Of such know I no mo.
" If ye have hap to keep it wele,
" There is no helm of iron and steel
" But it would carve in two."
Eglamour kissed that lady gent,
He took his leave and forth he went, &c.;

and having reached the giant's park, followed the wall till he arrived at the gate, and entered.

The trees, which were principally cypress-trees, appeared to be as fine as he had any reason to expect; the deer, of whose size and beauty he was a much better judge, were the largest that he had ever seen; and the dun greyhound soon convinced him, by pulling down the choicest of the three famous harts, that the princess had not exaggerated his merits. Sir Eglamour now sounded his horn with such power that the giant, though a very good sleeper, and lodged at a considerable distance, was instantly roused, and hastened to the gate by which the intruder had entered, with a full determination of sacrificing him to the manes of his slaughtered venison. The knight in the mean time had deliberately *undone* (carved) the animal, blowing *the prize* at intervals upon his horn, and arriving at the gate, very civilly saluted the giant, and requested leave to pass through with his prey. Sir Maroke answered in very coarse language, and seizing his club, aimed a blow at his opponent's head. Sir Eglamour at the same moment drew his sword, the brightness of which not only dazzled the eyes of the giant but totally deprived him of sight.

Howbeit he lost his sight,
He fought with Sir Eglamour the knight
Two dayes and more,

Till the third day *at prime** ;
Sir Eglamour waited well his time,
And to the heart him bore.
Thorough Goddis might, and his knife,
There the gyaunte lost his life;
Fast he began to roar.
For certain sooth, as I you say,
When he was *moten* † there he lay,
He was fifteen feet and more.

Sir Eglamour, having cut off his head, carried it together with the venison to his sovereign, and was received on his return with the acclamations of the whole court. The venison was pronounced to be the fairest and fattest that had ever been seen; and it was the general opinion that the head of Sir Maroke was the largest and ugliest head that could be imagined, and that even its elevation to the top of the high shoulders on which it had been originally placed must have been insufficient to soften the natural deformity of its features.

After three days passed between travelling and hard fighting Sir Eglamour required some refreshment; but no sooner was his strength recruited

* The first quarter of the artificial day, reckoning from sun-rise.

† meted, i. e. measured.

than Sir Prinsamour dispatched him on a new adventure, ordering him to bring away, from the distant land of *Satyn*, the head of a prodigious boar, whose tusks were a yard long, and who had devoured a large proportion of the inhabitants of that ill-fated country.

The knight departed, and travelled during a fortnight by land, and during a second fortnight by sea, so that if we knew the direction in which he moved, it would be easy to ascertain the situation of the land of Satyn; but in the mean time we must be satisfied with the consolation of knowing that he readily found the boar who was the object of his journey, whose laire was surrounded by dead bodies, many of which were cased in beautiful armour.

Sir Eglamour having arrived in the evening, thought fit to spend the night in the skirts of the forest, and proceeded, a little before sun-rise, in search of the monster, who was then returning from the sea where he had just taken *his morning's draught*. On discovering the knight, he began to whet his long tusks, and then rushed on to the attack, in which he gained the first advantage, and killed his adversary's horse, whilst his own tough hide remained perfectly uninjured by the spear. But Sir Eglamour soon recovered his legs, and

drawing his excellent sword had the pleasure to find that its edge made some impression on his adversary, though the enormous length of his tusks made it impossible to close with him. This battle therefore, like that which our hero had sustained against the giant, lasted also during two days and a half, after which the knight, having gained a favourable opportunity of approaching the monster, made a terrible blow at his neck, and severed his head from his body.

Some time before the close of this long conflict, the boar had frequently yelled so loud that the king of Satyn, who was hunting in the forest, attended by fifteen knights in complete armour, dispatched one of them to explore the cause of this unusual outcry; and this spectator arrived just in time to witness the termination of the combat, the account of which he carried back to the king, together with a correct description of the victor's armorial bearings.

" Of gold he beareth a seemly syght;
" A steed of azure, and armed knight,
" To batayle as he should gon.
" And on the crest upon the head, is
" A lady made in her likeness:
" His spurs are sable each one."

The king said, " So mote I the,
" Those riche armes will I see,"
And thither he took the way;
By that time Sir Eglamoure,
Had overcome the sharpe stoure;
And overthwart the boar lay.
The king said, " God rest with thee!"
" My lord," said Eglamour, " welcome be ye!
" Of peace now I thee pray;
" I have so foughten with the boar
" That certainly I may no more;
" This is the thirde day."

All the company disclaimed any intention of molesting him, and expressed their admiration of his prowess, assuring him that the wicked beast from whom he had just freed them had sometimes destroyed no less than forty brave men in a day. The king added, that, for the love of the stranger, he would take his dinner on the spot; and the cloth being laid, Sir Eglamour was plentifully regaled with venison and rich wine, and invited to spend a few days at the court of Satyn, for the purpose of recovering from his fatigue. But there remained a most important business to dispatch, which was to cut up the boar; and for this purpose it became necessary to request the aid of Sir Eglamour, be-

cause the tough hide of the animal defied the sharpest knives that could be found in the country of Satyn.

Eglamour to the boar gan gon,
And clave him by the rigge-bone,
That joy it was to see;
"Lordings," he said, "great and small,
"Give me the head and take you all;
"For why, that is my fee."
Against even, the king did dyght
A bath for that gentle knight,
That was of herbes good;
Sir Eglamour therin lay,
Till it was light of day,
That men to masses yode.

By means of this long-protracted bath, Sir Eglamour was perfectly restored to all his powers, and became enabled to reward his kind entertainer by a service of great importance. The boar, it seems, was connected, by the closest ties of friendship, with a huge and ugly giant named Sir Manas, own brother to the hideous Sir Maroke, whom Eglamour had deprived of his head; and this giant had thought fit to fall in love with the charming Ardanata, daughter of king Edmond of Satyn. Manas

had lately been absent on a visit to his brother, but was just returned in very ill humour; and it was foreseen that he would soon appear and renew his attempts to carry off the princess. Accordingly he made his appearance under the walls of the castle, about the time when Sir Eglamour, having quitted the bath, began to arm himself; and casting up his eyes beheld, with grief and indignation, the features of his four-footed favourite exhibited upon the point of a spear.

And when he looked on that head,
"Alas!" he cried, "art thou dead?
"My trust was all in thee!
"Now, by the law that I live in,
"My little speckled hoglin,
"Dear-bought shall thy death be!"

After this pathetic exclamation, he beat the walls with great fury, and continued to threaten vengeance on the murderer of his friend, till he was gratified by the sight of Sir Eglamour, who, mounted on a fiery courser, and armed at all points, issued from the castle, and putting his lance in the rest, attacked him at full speed. Sir Manas not only resisted the shock, but in an instant threw down both man and horse; so that the king and

his whole court began to despair of the safety of their champion: but Sir Eglamour lightly springing up, drew his terrible sword, closed with the giant, and cut off his right arm. The monster roared with pain, but continued to fight, though yelling at intervals as loudly as ever, till near sunset, when the patient knight, who had hitherto suffered him to exhaust himself by his own efforts, suddenly rushed forwards and completed his victory.

The grateful Edmond now wished to reward his deliverer by presenting to him the beautiful Ardanata, together with immediate possession of the kingdom of Satyn, and the young lady readily expressed her wish to become the recompense of his achievement; but finding that his heart was already engaged, she promised to wait fifteen years for the chance of his being then at liberty, and bestowed on him at parting a ring of such virtue as to preserve the life of its wearer from all perils whether by land or by water. The knight thankfully accepted the ring; packed up with the greatest care the two grisly heads which he had won in his adventure; and, after an absence of seven weeks, arrived in the capital of Artois.

Prinsamour, far from testifying any delight on

receiving the head of a second giant, in addition to that of the boar, only muttered a few words of complaint against Sir Eglamour, whose death he still hoped to compass, and whom he proposed immediately to dispatch upon a third adventure. But the champion requested a respite of twelve weeks, for the purpose of recruiting his strength; and having, by the mediation of his friends, obtained this permission, repaired to the chamber of fair Crystabell, to whom he had much to communicate. The recital of all that he had done, and of all that he had suffered since they parted, was terminated by protestations of unalterable affection on his part, which were re-echoed by the faithful Crystabell; from his successful performance of the two first feats of arms they anticipated his easy achievement of the third, which her father had promised to reward by the gift of her hand; they considered themselves as already united to each other by every necessary tie, and insensibly began to think that any further reserve would be almost culpable; so that, misled by a train of sophistry, very usual in that age of the world, they had before morning inverted the order of the ceremonies which constitute a legal marriage.

The twelve weeks of tranquillity for which

Eglamour had stipulated were soon passed, and his duty required him to set out towards Rome, for the purpose of killing a tremendous dragon which had long desolated the country round that city. He therefore took leave of his mistress; left with her his enchanted ring; encountered the dragon; and successively cut off its tail, its wings, and its head; but being severely wounded by his poisonous enemy, was put under the care of Viatdur, the daughter of Constantine, then emperor of Rome. The remedies administered by this lady at length restored him to health; but his convalescence was so tedious, that when he returned in triumph to Artois, he found himself deprived of the best fruits of his victory.

The count, after an interval of many months, convinced that Sir Eglamour had perished in his conflict with the dragon, began to flatter himself that his former projects respecting the establishment of the fair Crystabell might yet be realized, when he heard with equal surprise and indignation that she was happily delivered of a most beautiful boy.

Then the earl made his vow;
" Daughter, unto the sea shalt thou,
" In a ship, by thee one:

" Thy younge son shall be thy fere,
" Christendom getteth it none here!"
Her maidens wept each one.
Her mother in swoon did fall,
Right so did her friendes all;

but intercession was fruitless, and the lovely Crystabell was, with her infant son, abandoned to the winds and waves in a vessel without mariners, sail, oars, or rudder.

The vessel however seems to have performed a voyage of no contemptible length with considerable expedition. In the first instance indeed it brought her to a country without any human inhabitants, where she landed, and where a bird, which is still familiarly known to heralds, and which is called a griffin, carried off her infant son, who was enveloped in a scarlet mantle, and had round his waist a golden girdle. The disconsolate mother again embarked, and after a second voyage, during which, "*as the great book of Rome says**," she was five days without food, arrived on the shores of Egypt, was discovered and con-

* The author in this place certainly appears to quote the "Gesta Romanorum" for this singularly absurd story; but I have not been able to discover it in that collection.

veyed to the king; and the said king fortunately turning out to be her uncle, was most kindly and hospitably entertained during a period of about fifteen years. In the mean time her son was carried by the griffin into *Israel*; was found by the king of that country, who happened to be hunting; was educated with great care at his court, under the name of Degrabell, *because he fell from the talons of a griffin* *; and became in process of time a most valorous and accomplished knight.

We must now return to Sir Eglamour, who, being whole and sound, took leave of the emperor of Rome and of his fair daughter, and travelling as expeditiously as he could, arrived in Artois with his dragon's head, and learnt the whole extent of his misfortune.

Eglamour went into the hall,
Before the squyers and knightes all:
"And thou, earl of Arteys,
"Take," he said, "the dragon's heved;
"All is mine that here is leaved:
"What doest thou in my place?"

* It must be left to the sagacity of the reader to find out the language in which the word Degrabell has this meaning.

Great dool it was to hear,
When he called Crystabell his fere;
"What, art thou drowned in the sea?
"God that died on rood bitterly,
"On thy soule have mercy,
"And on that young child so free!"
The earl was so 'feard of Eglamour,
That he was fain to take the tower;
That evermore woe him be!

To besiege him in this citadel would have occasioned a loss of much time, and Eglamour was anxious to leave a country now grown hateful to him. He therefore ordered all the property of his enemy to be seized, divided it amongst those whom he knew to be most trusty and necessitous, rewarded other friends by conferring on them the order of knighthood; and having ordered masses to be sung in all the churches for the soul of his Crystabell, departed for the Holy Land, where, during fifteen years, he distinguished himself, both in battle and in tournament, by feats of arms against the unbelievers.

At this time the king of Israel, who had insensibly acquired for Degrabell the affection of a father, became anxious to procure a wife for the

young man whom he destined to the possession of his throne; and hearing that there was, at the court of the king of Egypt, a lady of incomparable beauty, set sail for that country, together with his adopted son, whom he had lately invested with the order of chivalry. The king of Egypt received the reverend monarch of Israel with suitable respect, suffered his niece to be exhibited to her young suitor, and declared his willingness to consent to the match, after trying the address of young Degrabell, whom he invited to break a spear with him in the lists on the following day. The young knight readily accepted the offer, overthrew his royal opponent, and was solemnly married to his own mother. But the bride having cast her eyes on the shield of Degrabell, who bore a griffin holding in its talons an infant wrapped in a scarlet mantle, burst into tears, and relating her whole story, was on the same day released from her unnatural engagement.

The king of Israel, however, seemed to think that Crystabell was too beautiful to remain any longer single, and offered her the choice of all his knights; but her son insisted that those who aspired to the honour of her hand should previously overthrow him as he had overthrown the king of Egypt; and that for the purpose of set-

tling at once the pretensions of a number of candidates, a tournament should be immediately proclaimed throughout all the adjoining country. In this proposal the two kings acquiesced; and Crystabell herself, whom her misfortunes seem to have inspired with a great propensity to matrimony, having readily acceded to it, the tournament was announced, and attracted to Egypt numberless persons of high rank, amongst whom were the king of Satyn, and the long-lost and almost forgotten Eglamour, who was then returning from his warfare against the Heathens.

The veteran warrior no longer felt solicitous to acquire honour in a tournament, and being ignorant that the prize for which the knights were preparing to contend was that Crystabell for whom he had suffered so much, took his stand near an angle of the lists, and surveyed the combatants in perfect silence and with apparent indifference. Knight after knight presented himself to claim the hand of the lady, but all were successively unhorsed by the youthful Degrabell, and she would have been left to pine in celibacy, if her champion, ashamed of a series of success, which had cost him so little labour, had not solicited the unknown knight to break a lance with him. Eglamour replied, that his being there was quite accidental, and that, be-

ing on his return from the Holy Land, he considered himself as a privileged person. "If so," said Degrabell, "it had been more worship to thee to have come here unarmed." Eglamour, with a smile, asked if he had not yet had justing enough, and added,

"That day falle have I seen,
"With as big men have I been,
"And yet well gone my way.
"And yet, forsooth, said he than,
"I will do as well as I can
"With thee once to play."

With these words he turned his horse, took his distance, and charging the youth with irresistible impetuosity, threw him out of his saddle to the earth.

Crystabell, who had witnessed her son's overthrow, and for some moments was even alarmed for his life, surveyed his conqueror with trembling curiosity. On his shield was painted a rude representation of the event which he had long deplored; a ship of gold, containing a lady and an infant, and surrounded by waves which "were made both grim and bold," as on the point of over-

whelming the unfortunate vessel. These armorial bearings, however, might perhaps be the effect of accident, and she could not venture, on such grounds, to indulge the very improbable hope which the mysterious device so naturally suggested. When he was disarmed, and seated at table by her side, his air and voice, though much altered, gave her confidence in her expectations, and his answers to her questions fully confirmed them. She swooned with joy, and Eglamour would not have failed to do the same, but that it was necessary to receive in his arms his beloved Crystabell. All the noble guests shared the joy of the faithful and happy couple, and their accomplished son, for whom the good king of Israel was still as anxious as ever to procure a suitable wife, received the hand of the beautiful Ardanata, daughter of the king of Satyn, who was thus rewarded for a constancy of fifteen years to her old deliverer by obtaining a younger husband in the same family. It was resolved that both weddings should be solemnised in the county of Artois, for which the whole company immediately embarked, and the wicked earl having very providentially broken his neck, by falling from his tower on the day of their arrival, the

nuptials of the father and son were celebrated with unexampled festivity in the presence of the kings of Israel and Egypt, and of the emperor Constantine, who hastened from Rome at the summons of his antient benefactor.

LAY LE FRAINE.

THIS antient and curious little poem, translated from the French of Marie, is preserved in the Auchinleck M.S. It is mutilated in two places, and wants the conclusion; these defects, however, are unimportant with respect to the story, which I have supplied from the French. In point of language and versification it has more merit than any poem of the very early period at which it was written, and does not suffer by a comparison with Marie's original.

THE author begins his prologue by observing, that in antient times, Lays, intended to be accompanied by the harp, were composed on all sorts of subjects.

Some beth of war, and some of woe;
And some of joy and mirth also;

And some of treachery and of guile;
Of old aventures that fell while;
And some of *lourdes** and ribaudy;
And many there beth of fairy:
Of all thinges that men seth,
Most of love, forsooth, there beth.
In Bretayne, by old time,
These lays were made; so sayeth this rhyme,
&c.

He then informs us, that the Bretons never failed of converting into lays all the anecdotes which they thought worth consigning to memory, and that the following was thus composed and called Lay le Fraine (frêne), or "The Adventure of the Ash."

In the "West countrie" lived two knights, both men of opulence, who had been friends from their infancy, and had married about the same time. One of the ladies became pregnant, and after the usual time was delivered of two boys; an event which her husband thought of sufficient importance to announce to his friend, particularly as it had been previously agreed between them that each should become foster-father

* jests.

to the children of the other. He therefore called a messenger, and dispatched him to his neighbour with the intelligence.

The messenger goth, and hath nought forgete,
And findeth the knight at his mete;
And fair he gret, in the hall,
The lord, the levedi, the meynè all;
And sith then, on knees down him set,
And the lord full fair he gret.
" He bade that thou should to him te,
" And, for love, his *gossibbe** be."
" Is his levedi delivered *with sounde*† ?"
" Ya, sir, y-thonked be God, *yestronde*‡."
" And whether a maiden child, other a knave ?"
" Tway sones, sir, God hem save !"
The knight therof was glad and blithe,
And thanked Godes sonde swithe,
And granted his errand in all thing,
And gaf him a palfray for his tiding.
Then was the lady of the house
A proud dame, and malicious,
Hoker-full, iche mis-segging§,
Squeamous, and eke scorning.

* gossip, god-father. † health, safety.
‡ yesterday.
§ full of frowardness, each mis-saying or reviling.

To iche woman she had envie;
She spake these words of felonie.
" Ich have wonder, thou messenger,
" Who was thy lordes conseillor,
" To teach him about to send,
" And tell shame in *iche an end**!
" That his wife hath tway children y-bore!
" Well may iche man wite therfore
" That tway men her han hadde in bower:
" That is hir bothe dishonour!"

The messenger was sorely abashed by these unexpected and unjust reflections on his mistress; the husband reprimanded his wife very severely for the intemperance of her tongue; and all the women of the country, amongst whom the story was rapidly circulated, united in prayer to God, that if she should ever prove with child a worse misfortune might befall her, and that her calumny on all prolific mothers might receive some signal and dreadful punishment.

Whether the prayers of these pious matrons were as efficacious as their anger was sincere, or whether some other causes may have contributed to the event, the lady did shortly after prove with

* each an end, i. e., in every quarter.

child, and brought into the world two daughters. The circumstance certainly was very untoward, and the haughty dame felt it most poignantly. She was now reduced to the alternative of avowing herself guilty of a calumny against her innocent neighbour, or of imputing to herself, in common with the other, the crime of adultery, of which she had not been guilty; unless she could contrive to remove one of the twins who had introduced themselves into the world through her intervention, but in direct opposition to her wishes and interest. The project of destroying her own child was, at first, rejected with horror; but after revolving the subject in her mind, and canvassing with great logical acuteness the objections to this atrocious measure, she determined to adopt it, because she could ultimately cleanse herself from the sin, by doing private penance, and obtaining priestly absolution.

Having thus removed her scruples, she called the midwife, and directed her to destroy one of the infants, and to declare that one only had been born. But the midwife who claimed no inconsiderable share in the glory of adding to the number of human beings by the birth of twins, would not consent to mutilate her own fame by removing either of these living monuments of her science;

and the unnatural mother was reduced to seek for a more submissive and supple agent. She had a maid, whom she had educated in her family, to whom she imparted her difficulties, and this confidential counsellor at once proposed a contrivance for removing them. "Give me the child," said she, "and be assured that without destroying it I will so remove it that it shall never give you any further trouble. There are many religious houses in the neighbourhood, whose inhabitants cannot be better employed than in nursing and educating orphan children. I will take care that your infant shall be discovered by some of these good people, under whose care, by the blessing of Providence, it will thrive and prosper; and in the mean time I will take such means that its health shall not suffer. Dismiss your sorrow therefore, and trust in my discretion." The lady was overjoyed, and accepted the offer with assurances of eternal gratitude.

As it was her wish that those who should find the child might know that it was born of noble parents,

She took a rich *baudekine* *,
That her lord brought from *Constantine* †,
And lapped the little maiden therin;
And took a ring of gold fine,

* a rich mantle lined with fur. † Constantinople.

And on her right arm it knit,
With a lace of silk in *plit* *.
The maid took the child her *mid* †,
And stale away in an even tide,
And passed over a wild heath;
Thorough field and thorough wood she *geth* ‡,
All the winter-long night.
The weather was clear, the moon was light,
So that she com by a forest side;
She wox all weary, and gan abide.
Soon after she gan heark,
Cockes crow, and dogs bark;
She arose, and thither wold;
Near and nearer she gan behold.
Walls and houses fele she seigh;
A church, with steeple fair and high;
Then n'as there nother street no town,
But an house of religion;
An order of nuns, well y-dight,
To servy God both day and night.
The maiden abode no *lengore* §,
But yede her to the churche door,
And on knees she sat her down,
And said, weepand, her orisoun.

*, plaited, twisted. †, with. ‡, goeth.
§, longer, rhythmi gratiâ.

" O Lord," she said, " Jesu Christ,
" That sinful mannes *bedes* * hearst,
" *Underfong* † this present,
" And help this seli innocent!
" That it mote y-christened be,
" For Marie love, thy mother free!"
She looked up, and by her seigh
An asche, by her, fair and high,
Well y-boughed, of mickle price;
The body was hollow, as many one is.
Therin she laid the child, for cold,
In the *pel* ‡, as it was, *lyfold* §,
And blessed it with all her might.
With that it gan to dawe light.
The fowles up, and sung on bough,
And acre-men yede to the plough,
The maiden turned again anon,
And took the way she had ere gon.
The porter of the abbey arose,
And did his office in the close;
Rung the bells, and tapers light,
Laid forth books, and all ready dight.
The church door he undid,
And seigh anon, in the *stede* ||.

* prayers. † receive. ‡ fur. § folded.
|| place.

The pel liggen in the tree,
And thought, well that it might be,
That thieves had y-robbed some where,
And gone there forth, and let it there.
Therto he yede, and it unwound,
And the maiden child therin he found.
He took it up between his honde,
And thonked Jesu Christes sonde,
And home to his house he it brought,
And took it his daughter, and her besought
That she should keep it as she can,
For she was *melche**, *and couthe than.*
She bade it suck, and it n'old,
For it was nigh dead for cold.
Anon, fire she a-light,
And warmed it well, *aplight*†;
She gave it suck upon her *barm*‡,
And siththen, laid it to sleep warm.
And when the mass was y-done,
The porter to the abbesse com full soon.
" Madame, what rede ye of this thing?
" To-day, right in the morning,
" Soon after the first *staund*§,
" A little maiden-child ich found

* she had milk, and was able to suckle it.
† certainly—quasi I plight; I promise you.
‡ lap. § hour.

" In the hollow ash there out;
" And a pel her about;
" A ring of gold also was there;
" How it com thither I n'ot ne'er."
The abbesse was a-wondered of this thing.
" Go," she said, " *on hying**,
" And fetch it hither, I·pray thee;
" It is welcome to God and me.
" Ich will it helpen as I can,
" And segge it is my kinswoman."
The porter anon it gan forth bring,
With the pel, and with the ring.
The abbesse let clepe a priest anon,
And let it christen in function.
And, for it was in an ash y-found,
She cleped it *Frain* in that stound.
The name† of the ash is a frain,
After the language of Bretayn;
Forthy‡, Le Frain men clepeth this lay,
More than ash, in each countrey.
This Frain thrived from year to year;
The abbess' niece men weend it were.
The abbess her gan teach, and *beld*§.
By that she was twelve winter eld,

* in haste.

† In the MS. it is "*freyns*," which I presume is a mistake of the transcriber.

‡ therefore. § protect, defend.

In all Englond there n'as none
A fairer maiden than she was one.
And when she couthe ought of *manhede**,
She bade the abbesse her *wisse*† and rede,
Which were her kin, one or other,
Father or mother, sister or brother.
The abbesse her in council took,
To tellen her she nought forsook,
How she was founden in all thing;
And took her the cloth and the ring,
And bade her keep it in that stede;
And, therwhiles she lived, so she did.
Then was there, in that cuntré,
A rich knight of land and fee,
Proud, and young, and jollif,
And had nought yet y-wedded wife.
He was stout, of great renown,
And was y-cleped Sir Guroun.
He heard praise that maiden free,
And said, he would her see.
He dight him in the way anon,
And jolliflich thither is gone,
And bade his man segge, verament,
He should toward a turnament.
The abbesse, and the nounes all,
Fair him grette in the guest-hall;

* manhood, here used for the relation of consanguinity.
† teach and advise her.

And damsel Frain, so fair of mouth,
Grette him fair, as she well couth.
And swithe well he gan devise
Her semblaunt, and her gentrise,
Her lovesome eyen, her *rode** so bright,
And commenced to love her anon-right;
And thought how he might take on,
To have her for his leman.
He thought, "Gif ich come her to
"More than ich have y-do,
"The abbesse will *souchy*† guile,
"And *wide*‡ her in a little while."
He compast another *enchesoun*§;
To be brother of that religion.
"Madame," he said to the abbesse,
"*I-lovi*‖ wele, in all goodness,
"Ich will give one and other
"Londes and rents, to become your brother¶,
"That ye shall ever fare the *bet***,
"When I come to have *recet*††."
At few wordes they ben *at one*‡‡,
He graithes him, and forth is gone.

* complexion. † suspect. ‡ void, carry away.
§ excuse. ‖ beloved.
¶ of the same religious fraternity.
** better. †† lodging, abode. ‡‡ agreed.

Oft he com, by day and night,
To speak with that maiden bright;
So that, with his fair *behest**,
And with his glosing, at lest
She granted him to don his will,
When he will, loud and still.
" Leman," he said, " thou must let be
" The abbesse *thy niece*†, and go with me.
" For ich am riche, of swich powere,
" Ye finde bet than thou hast here."
The maiden grant, and to him trist,
And stole away, that no man wist;
With her took she no thing
But her pel, and her ring.
When the abbesse gan aspy
That she was with the knight *awy*‡,
She made mourning in her thought,
And her *bement*§, and gained nought.
So long she was in his castel,
That all his meynie loved her well.
To rich and poor she gan her 'dress,
That all her loved more and less;
And thus she led with him her life,
Right as she had ben his wedded wife.

* promise. † it should be thy *aunt*.
‡ away, rythmi gratia. § bemoaned.

His knightes com, and to him speke,
And holy church commandeth eke,
Some lordis daughter for to take,
And his leman all forsake.
And said, him were well more fair,
In wedlock to geten him an heir,
Than lead his life with swiche one,
Of whose kin he knewe none.
And said, " here besides, is a knight,
" That hath a daughter fair and bright,
" That shall bear his heritage;
" Taketh her in mariage!"
Loth him was that deed to do,
Ac, at last, he granted therto.
The *forward** was y-maked aright,
And were at one, and truth plight.
Allas! that he no had y-wit,
Ere the forward were y-smit!
That she, and his leman also,
Sistren were, and twinnes two!
Of o father begeten they were,
Of o mother born *y-fere*†:
That *hi*‡ so were ne wist none,
For sooth I say, but God alone.

* contract. † together. ‡ they, Sax.

The new bride was graithed with all,
And brought home to the lordis hall.
Her father com with her also,
The levedi her mother, and other mo.
The bishop of the lond, withouten fail,
Com to do the spousail.
* * * * * *

The young rival of Le Frain was distinguished, like her sister, by a sylvan appellation: her name was *Le Codre* (corylus, the hazel), and the knight's tenants had sagaciously drawn a most favourable prognostic of his future happiness from the superiority of nuts to vile ash-keys; but neither the knight himself, nor any of his household, were disposed to augur favourably of a marriage which tended to deprive them of the amiable orphan. The feast was magnificent, but dull; and never were apparent rejoicings more completely marred by a general feeling of constraint and formality. Le Frain alone, concealing the grief which preyed on her heart, was all zeal and activity; and by her unceasing attentions conciliated the pity and esteem of the bride, and even of her mother, who had hitherto felt the utmost anxiety to procure the dismissal of this formidable rival. At the conclusion

of the banquet she employed herself, with the utmost care, in the decoration of the bridal chamber; and, having observed that the covering of the bed was not sufficiently costly, spread over it the magnificent mantle which she had received from the abbess, and had hitherto preserved with the utmost solicitude. She had scarcely left the room when the bride entered it, accompanied by her mother, who, casting her eyes on this splendid mantle, surveyed it with feelings of the most poignant remorse, and immediately recognized the testimony of her crime. She questioned the chamberlains, who were unable to explain the appearance of an ornament which they had never before beheld; she then interrogated Le Frain, and, at the end of a short examination fell into a swoon; exclaiming, "Fair child! thou art my daughter!" Her husband was then summoned, and she confessed to him with tears, and with every expression of penitence, the sinful act which she had committed, and the providential discovery of her daughter by means of the mantle and of the ring, both of which, being presents from himself, were perfectly familiar to his recollection. The knight embraced his child with the utmost tenderness, and prevailed on the bishop to dissolve the mar-

riage, which was not yet consummated, and to unite their son-in-law to the original object of his affections. The other sister was shortly after bestowed on another neighbouring lord, and the adventures of Le Frain and Le Codre were formed into a lay, which, as we have seen, received its name from the former.

SIR EGER, SIR GRAHAME, AND SIR GRAY-STEEL.

THIS romance is by no means deficient in merit; but I do not know of its existence in a perfect state, either in MS. or in print, unless it be preserved entire in Bishop Percy's folio. It was printed (perhaps at Aberdeen) in 1711, and from a copy of this date, in the possession of Mr. Douce, the following abstract is taken. But the printer has evidently followed a very imperfect MS. with which also he seems to have taken great liberties: and the story, as it now stands, is so obscurely told, that the catastrophe is quite unintelligible, and has been, in the present abstract, supplied by conjecture.

That it was extremely popular in the early part of the sixteenth century, is evident from the manner in which it is mentioned in the "*Complaynt of Scotland*," first published in 1549; and the reader will find all the information which can now be collected respecting it, in Mr. Leyden's valuable edition of that work, p. 231. 273, and in Mr. Scott's "Sir Tristrem," p. 287.

In the kingdom of Bealm* lived a powerful earl whose name was Biges, and who had an only daughter, of incomparable beauty, named Winliane. The young lady, whom it was almost impossible to behold with indifference, was, rather unfortunately for her numerous admirers, of a cold and inflexible character. Having observed that military prowess was the qualification which attracted general esteem, she concluded that men were formed for the sole purpose of fighting; and therefore frankly informed her parents that she was perfectly careless about the rank, or wealth, or age, or temper, or figure of her husband; and that even her deference for paternal authority would not be sufficient to induce her acceptance of a partner for life, because the possession of her person was, in her estimation, the natural right of the man who should be able to win her from a host of rivals.

In consequence of these opinions, the fair Winliane continued long unmarried. Had she been contented to abide by the decision of a single

* This kingdom is unknown to historians and geographers. The name might be taken for a corruption of Bohemia; but it seems to belong to some country at a moderate distance from Galloway.

tournament, the matter might have been easily settled; but a peerless knight is not an animal of frequent occurrence. Many champions obtained successively the honour of receiving marks of complacency from the beautiful countess, and were successively obliterated from her memory by more sturdy or more fortunate adversaries; but at length, a young knight, named Sir Eger, having acquired a decided superiority over all his competitors, seemed to have fixed her inconstant inclinations. He was blessed with the promise of her hand; and her choice being extremely acceptable to her parents, preparations were made for the early celebration of their nuptials.

Sir Eger, thus fortunate in his love, was not less so in his friendship. He had a brother in arms, the young and accomplished Sir Graham, who, perfectly indifferent to popular applause, seemed to live for the sole purpose of establishing, beyond competition, the superiority of his companion. These young heroes were inseparable; they inhabited the same apartment; they communicated to each other all their projects and wishes; and Sir Graham was not the least impatient of the two for the arrival of the day, which should unite Sir Eger to his Winliane. But the young lover was unfortunately too much

in love. Accustomed to respect all the opinions and caprices of his haughty mistress, he persuaded himself that his valour was not yet sufficiently signalized; and having heard of a perilous adventure, which he might hope to accomplish before the conclusion of his marriage, rashly resolved to undertake it, notwithstanding the wise remonstrances of Sir Graham, to whom alone he had confided his project.

And he went forth, him alone,
And all vanquisht came he home,
In his chamber, upon a night,
Wounded sore, and evil dight.
His *knife was tint* *, his sheath was ta'en,
His scabard from his thigh was gane.
He had mo wounds with sword and knife
Than ever man that had his life.
A truncheon of his spear he bare
To lean him on; he had na mare.
On his bed-side he sate him down,
He groaned sare, and fell in sown.

Sir Graham, having with some difficulty restored him to his senses, endeavoured, but without success, to console him under his misfortune. "Talk

* dagger.

not to me of comfort," exclaimed Sir Eger, "since my mistress is lost to me for ever. I am vanquished and disgraced; vanquished in equal combat by a single knight. My armour, as you know, was excellent; it is this nerveless arm which has failed me: I shall see the lovely Winliane bestowed on some more cautious knight, who has remained at home while I was hastening to defeat and infamy; and I have deserved to endure the misery of such a sight." Sir Graham thought it useless to argue any further till he should have learned all the circumstances of his friend's adventure; he therefore remained silent, while Sir Eger pursued his narration.

"I was forewarned by a traveller, whom I met by accident on my road, and who directed me to the territories of my adversary, that to subdue the redoubtable Gray-steel was no easy enterprise; but I resolved to persevere, and to enter the 'land of doubt,' so called from the number of knights whom this champion has successively destroyed. Having passed over a spacious moor, bordered by lofty mountains, I arrived on the banks of a deep river; and, having discovered a ford which had been described to me, continued my journey through a forest which encircled the forbidden land. Before I could reach the plain

I heard a confused sound, as of horses' feet. My steed stopped, erected his ears, and prepared to rush forward. I raised my eyes and saw a knight in red armour, and mounted on a bay horse, advancing at full speed towards me; I spurred to meet him, and my spear was so well directed that its point struck him in the middle of the breast; but the shaft shivered in my hands, whilst his spear passed through my shield, through the whole of my armour, and through part of my body. Yet I sate in the saddle. We wheeled, and at the second encounter he slew my horse. I rose as quickly as I could: but his active courser gave him again the advantage; he overthrew me and trampled me under his horse's feet. Having at length recovered my legs, I drew my sword, rushed to meet him, and aimed at him a blow in which I exerted all my strength. I missed his person, but cut through his spear and killed his horse. We now met again on equal terms; but my sword seemed to strike on adamant, whilst his drew blood at every stroke. At length my blade broke in my hand. I drew my dagger and closed with him. Yet in this conflict also he preserved the same advantage. His armour resisted all my efforts, though my blows, as I thought, were not dealt without effect. I had seen him reel and

crouch beneath the blow by which I broke my sword; an involuntary groan escaped him when I struck him near the belt with my dagger; and having urged its point through an opening of his vizor, I withdrew it streaming with his blood. But, on renewing the blow, my dagger also broke off at the handle. Meanwhile his weapon was far more efficacious: my hauberk, of the best Milan work, my *actown*, (quilted jacket) in short my whole armour, which had often preserved my father, and afterwards myself, from wounds, seemed incapable of opposing the slightest resistance to its edge. Blinded by the blood which flowed down my forehead, and smarting at every pore, I struggled in vain against my well-armed adversary, whom I still attempted to fell with the handle of my dagger. I sunk at his feet in a swoon.

"How long I remained on the ground I know not; but I presume that my trance was of no short duration, because, on my recovery, I perceived by my side a second knight, who had fallen beneath the sword of the terrible Gray-steel. The conqueror had cut off from each of us the little finger of the right hand, as a token of his victory. Seeing a stream of water near us, I crept to it on my hands and knees, washed the blood from my eyes, refreshed myself by a moderate

draught, and, having found the broken staff of my spear, raised myself by its means and attempted to walk. My own horse, and that of my antagonist, lay dead on the field of battle; but a third, of mean appearance, was grazing at some distance. I mounted him with much pain and difficulty, and began my journey homewards, which I continued during the remainder of the day.

"At the approach of evening I beheld a large town, which I avoided, and advanced towards the castle, which had a spacious garden, with arbours disposed along its inclosure, and banqueting-rooms of great magnificence. Stopping near one of these arbours, I beheld a beautiful young lady, clothed in a scarlet mantle embroidered with gold and pearls, who issued from her bower, and slowly advanced towards me. On my alighting to meet her, she saluted me as a knight, and invited me to repair to the castle, where she assured me that I should receive the most hospitable entertainment, and might profit by the assistance of the most cunning leeches in the whole country; but I declined her offer, and requested only to be provided with food and lodging during a single night, entreating that I might be left in total privacy, as sleep was principally necessary to my recovery. She courteously granted my request;

conducted me to her bower; placed me on her bed; and, having intrusted my horse to the care of one of her damsels, dispatched the other in quest of necessaries for myself.

Baked fowls she brought again,
Spice and wine, bread of main.
A *laver* * they have gotten soon;
Warm water into it was done,
And, in a silver basin,
Her own hands washed mine een.
And when she saw mine hands bare,
Then waxed mine anger far the mare.
The glove was whole, my finger was *tint* †;
She might well know it was no dint.——
She perceived that I thought shame,
She asked not what was my name,
Or of what country I was come,
Into what place or in what room,
Or of what country that I were,
But eased me in all manere.
Such drink then as she gave me there,
Saw I never in my fare!
That so much could me restore:
For I was vanquished all before;

* a basin, *lavoir*, O. Fr. † lost.

More weak and weary might no man be,
And dried of blood, as any tree.
Her drinks they brought me soon in state
That I might speak and answer make.
She and her maids, those ladies three,
Of all my gear they spoiled me;
Both of mine hauberk, and mine actown,
Washed me syn, and laid me down.
With her own hands, white as the milk,
She *stopped my wounds full of silk* *,
And syn laid me into a bed
That was with silken sheets spread.

"They now left me to my repose; but the lady and her maidens assiduously watched me during the night, amusing themselves with songs of love, till the notes of the birds from the neighbouring arbour warned them of the approach of day. The lady then brought me, in a horn, a medicated drink of a green colour, which was so potent that my pains immediately vanished. She again dressed all my wounds, drew from her wardrobe a silken shift, which she put on over my shirt, and then braced on my armour, the

* Common lint would, probably, answer the purpose better; but while silk was a novelty it was thought to possess many medical as well as other perfections.

weight and pressure of which no longer distressed me. Recalled, by her means, to new life and vigour, I thanked her in terms expressive of the warmest gratitude; but she interrupted me, and said 'I know, Sir knight, that thou bearest in thy heart a secret passion. When thy love shall again begin to exert its influence, all thy wounds will open afresh, and all the pains from which my skill has relieved thee will instantly return. Yet be of good cheer; for the lady of thy heart, by repeating the same treatment which I have pursued, will easily complete thy cure.' Having, with great difficulty, persuaded her to accept some trifling jewels which I carried with me, I took leave of this amiable lady. She supplied me with wine and provisions for my journey; and I arrived, healthy and vigorous, within a short distance of this place: but, on approaching the abode of my beloved Winliane, the prophetic threat of my fair preserver was verified. I fell from my horse in a swoon, my wounds began to bleed afresh, and I have scarcely been able to reach my chamber in the miserable state in which you now behold me!"

Sir Graham had listened, in mute attention, to the distressing narrative of his friend, but was unable to draw from it any topic of rational con-

solation. "Thou art," said he, "the victim of thy rashness. Yet, as thy weapons only have failed thee in a contest with the formidable Gray-steel, it were unwise to repine. We cannot conceal from thy mistress thy return or thy misfortune; but we must alter the circumstances of thy adventure, and relate that thy wounds have resulted from a conflict with a number of adversaries." The advice was good; but an untoward circumstance had already prevented the success of the stratagem.

Winliane, beginning to fear that Sir Eger's stay would be protracted beyond the time fixed for their marriage, was become extremely impatient for his arrival. The window of her bower commanded a view of the apartment occupied by the two friends; and as she was constantly on the watch, the lights which she beheld on the night of her lover's return raised her curiosity: so that, throwing a mantle over her shoulders, she hastened to the door, and was preparing to enter, when the low and mysterious sound of their voices led her to listen to their conversation. Her ears served her so well that she distinctly overheard the real history of Sir Eger's defeat, and the story by which they intended to deceive her; after which she again retired to her chamber, though not so se-

cretly as to escape the notice of Sir Graham, who suspected, from the precipitation with which she rushed by their window, that she was already mistress of their whole secret, and who was confirmed in his suspicion, by finding that, in the course of a few hours, the whole court were informed of Sir Eger's return.

In the mean time he procured for his friend the ablest *leech* that could be found. The count and countess came daily to the sick man, who lay without signs of life; while Sir Graham, in answer to their inquiries respecting his adventure, replied, "that travelling in quest of glory, he had been suddenly assailed, in a wild and desert place, by the whole kindred of a knight whom he had formerly overcome. That though they were ten in number, and most ungenerously assailed him all together, he had ultimately killed seven of them, and put to flight the remaining three, though after receiving so many wounds that his life was still in the greatest danger." This report, which considering the prowess of Sir Eger was not incredible, was generally believed, and the whole court expressed the utmost solicitude for the recovery of the youthful hero.

Winliane alone appeared indifferent about the

fate of her lover. Three days elapsed before she condescended to visit him; and even then, after addressing to him a few careless questions, she was preparing to retire, when Sir Graham, fearful that her unfeeling behaviour might produce a dangerous effect on the health of his friend, detained her almost by force in the room; and, having feigned to converse with her in a whisper, declared aloud to Sir Eger, "that the lady had only forborne to see him at the earnest request of his physician, and that her own health had suffered no less than his by this cruel prohibition." The credulous lover was satisfied with this assurance; and during eleven weeks of sickness, the kind attentions of the count and countess, the care of his brother Sir Pallias, and, above all, the pious frauds of Sir Graham, whose invention constantly devised new excuses for the rare and formal visits of his mistress, continued to keep him in ignorance of her unkindness.

But the mind of his feeling and generous friend was by no means at ease. This system of deceit could not last much longer, and a discovery of the truth might yet be fatal to the convalescent. He therefore determined to ascertain exactly the state of Winliane's affections; and, having engaged her

in a conference, pleaded most eloquently, but most ineffectually, the cause of Sir Eger; and, having informed her that he was determined, whenever his health should permit, to seek out and combat the knight who was the cause of his late disaster, requested that she would enjoin him to abstain from an enterprise which could scarcely fail of proving fatal. The lady, after a moment's silence, calmly replied, "Sir Graham, you know that it was always my intention to accept as a husband that man only, who, from whatever cause, should be constantly victorious in every enterprise. Sir Eger appeared to be that man. As such I accepted him for my future lord. I was satisfied with what he had done; I exhorted him to refrain from seeking any new adventures; but he was rash and presumptuous. And what has he gained? You need not answer; for I know all. He has been vanquished; vanquished by Sir Gray-steel. I heard this from his own lips on the night of his arrival. I will give him no counsel; whether he go or stay, he has forfeited my hand, which he can never recover." Sir Graham, piqued at her insensibility, replied, "He, I am persuaded, will no longer trouble you with his suit, having found, during his last disastrous enterprise, a mistress equally captivating, and, as

he says, still more nobly born. Suppose therefore, since he slights you, that you should accept of me." This sarcastic proposal was answered by a look of indignation, and thus ended the conference.

Sir Graham now determined on the generous project which had long floated in his mind. He repaired to Sir Eger, and said, "The knight who hath disgraced you must be chastised in his turn. Had your weapons corresponded with your courage, he would have been slain, or made prisoner by you; it must be now my business to defeat or kill him under your name and character. But nine days must elapse before I can execute my purpose, because that time will be necessary to persuade the court of your complete recovery. Now rise and dress yourself; exhibit yourself at your window; appear to be occupied in reading romances, or in any other amusement. All will rejoice at the return of your health, particularly the count, who will hope to see you speedily united to his daughter. But of this I have my doubts; for women are very fickle. Next, gradually resume your usual exercises; and lastly, having equipped yourself as if for a distant adventure, repair to court, take leave of the count and countess, and return to me, who will be

ready to personate you. Remember to watch well the countenance of Winliane; but say little to her, and that with an air of indifference. Should I succeed, my return will be speedy; and you can easily pass a short interval in close retirement (for thus should I do if you were absent) without betraying yourself. If I fail, you will do your best to revenge me; and neither of us will be dishonoured, though both should be numbered amongst the victims of the mighty Gray-steel."—"Nay!" exclaimed Sir Eger, "though I should lie here these seven months, I will depute to no man a quarrel which is solely my own. I thank you much for your noble offer, but I must revenge myself or die."—"If you could lie here seven months without being supplanted by a rival, I would not intrude between you and Sir Gray-steel. But Winliane has encouraged the addesses of Sir Olyes; she knows your whole story, which she overheard by listening at our door; she considers you as disgraced."

Sir Eger said, "If it be so,
"Then wot I well, I must forego
"Love-liking, and manhood, all clean!"
The water rushed out of his een;

His head he strook, his hands he wrang,
And each hand on another dang.
Sir Grahame then said to him, "Let be!
"Ye shall be helped hastily.
"For here I vow to God of might,
"That I shall ride and seek the knight.
"Into what land that he in be,
"I shall him slay, or else he me.
"And if I chance to win the field,
"And get his helm, or yet his shield,
"Or any mark of him to see,
"The lady will think that it is ye."

Sir Eger now reluctantly consented, and his brother, Sir Pallias, was called in to assist at the conference. Their uncle, Sir Agam, had possessed an excellent sword, which was carefully preserved by his widow, and which it was judged indispensable to procure on this occasion. Sir Graham therefore repaired to the old lady, informed her that her nephew Sir Eger was on the point of going to encounter the terrible Gray-steel, and requested the loan of that weapon; as a security for which he lodged in her hands the charters of all his estates. The negotiation succeeded; and Sir Graham obtained not only the sword, but its whole history, which the good lady

related with much prolixity; assuring him that it was tough as wax, hard as flint, trenchant as lightning, and, in short, so valuable, that the pawn which he left in her hands would be a very inadequate compensation for its loss. Every thing being at length provided, Sir Eger put on his clothes, received the congratulations of the court, appeared to gain strength every hour, and on the eighth day arrayed himself in his armour, and repaired to the great hall to take leave of the knights, and of the count and countess. It was remarked by all present, that though his air was as confident as usual, he was pale and emaciated; in fact, it was not without effort that he was able to stand under the weight of his armour: and the countess, alarmed for the fate of her intended son-in-law, earnestly entreated him to forego his enterprise till his strength should be re-established. But he persisted in his resolution; and, having received on his knees the earl's permission to depart, and humbly kissed her hand, prepared to leave the hall. Winliane was there, but seemed perfectly indifferent to what was passing; and Sir Eger, having been strictly enjoined by Sir Graham to treat her with similar coldness, contented himself with asking her aloud whether she had any commands. "No," she replied. "but I

hope you will render this adventure more interesting than the last. You then left a finger behind you; this time you should at least leave a hand!" A murmur of disapprobation was immediately heard through the assembly, and Sir Eger was much mortified; but he dissembled his feelings, and, bowing to the assembly, retired to his apartment.

Winliane, however void of affection, was by no means deficient in curiosity. She hastened to the window of her bower for the purpose of witnessing her lover's departure, and of judging, by his mode of managing his horse, whether he was indeed so far recovered as to have a chance of success in the perilous enterprise which he had undertaken. In the mean time Sir Eger had thrown off his armour, and Sir Graham, with the assistance of Sir Pallias, was in a few minutes ready to personate his friend. A war-horse, caparisoned with the utmost care under the direction of Sir Pallias, who had attentively surveyed every girth and proved the strength of every buckle, was ready saddled at the door. The two brothers in arms parted after a short embrace. Sir Graham vaulted into the saddle, caused his steed to curvet for some minutes under the window of the astonished Winliane, and then, setting spurs to his

sides, departed in full gallop, and with the rapidity of lightning disappeared in the shades of the neighbouring forest. The lady could scarcely believe the testimony of her eyes. She descended from her bower, and repaired to the lodging of the knights, where Sir Eger, fatigued by the weight of his armour, equally dissatisfied with his mistress and with himself, and full of anxiety for Sir Graham, had already retired to bed. She hurried through the outer room, without noticing the salutations of Sir Pallias, who attempted to accost her, and passed into the bed-chamber, the windows of which were partly closed, so that the features of the knight within the bed could not be discovered. As she had so lately conversed with her lover, and had still more lately, as she thought, seen him depart on his adventure, she accosted him without suspicion by the name of his friend. "Sir Graham," said she, "I am lost in surprise! I have this moment beheld Sir Eger, who not ten days ago was confined to his bed: yet has he now the air of a hero; and, trust me, he seems likely to speed in what he has undertaken. Little confidence, however, can be placed in the prowess of a knight so lately discomfited. To what purpose should he engage in fresh adventures? His honour can no longer be recovered!" Sir Eger,

easily counterfeiting the voice of his friend, utterly denied the triumph of Sir Gray-steel, and repeated most circumstantially to the indignant lady the fabricated tale, which she knew to be totally false; concluding by a declaration, that he was determined not to stir from his bed, nor to admit any visitant except herself, till the return of the injured and defamed Sir Eger. Sir Pallias vouched for the same story, and made the same declaration: so that the fair Winliane, overwhelmed with vexation, and almost in doubt whether all her senses had not conspired to deceive and confound her, hastily put an end to her visit, and retired to her chamber.

We must now attend upon Sir Graham, who, having reached the forest, began to recapitulate in his mind the directions by which he was to guide himself, for the purpose of finding his road over a large tract of desert country, and the tokens which would enable him to recognise the beautiful Lillias, to whose medical skill his friend had been so much indebted. After thirty miles of a road which was already familiar to him, he would find an extensive moor, and must follow, during four days, the right bank of a mountain torrent, until it should be joined by a second, which he must ford, and then keep the united stream on his

left hand till he should arrive at the sea-shore. He must then follow the sands, keeping a rocky forest on his right, till he reached an extensive and cultivated plain. He would then see at a distance a fair castle, with spacious orchards and gardens, and, on a nearer approach, would readily distinguish the lady's bower, which was remarkable by its numerous spires, surmounted by vanes and weathercocks richly gilt, and shining like glass in the sun's rays. The lady was distinguished from her attendants by her height and fair proportions, by the clearness of her complexion, and by the beauty of her eye-brows, which nearly joined. Besides this there was a small red spot near one of her eyes, which the extreme whiteness of her skin rendered very conspicuous. The silken *sark*, (shift) which he bore with him, would serve as an introduction, and he was to convey to her some rich broches and jewels in return for her kind hospitality to Sir Eger.

These instructions were fully sufficient for the guidance of a knight, who was of course in the habit of travelling through intricate forests, and of exercising his sagacity in finding his way by means of the sun and stars, by the moss on the stems of trees, and by other natural indications. But Sir Graham was still more fortunate. Having reached

the sea-side, he overtook a yeoman mounted on a hackney, who readily undertook to guide him to the castle. From him he learnt that the country which he had just entered was called *Gallias* *; that the earl, whose castle he beheld, was named Gorius; that Lillias was his daughter and heiress; her brother, Sir Alistoun, having been killed by Gray-steel; and lastly, that she was still unmarried, though she had been betrothed to a knight, named Sir Garrentine, who, having attempted to revenge the death of her brother, had been killed by the same formidable champion. The yeoman did not quit Sir Graham till he approached the city, which he entered alone, and stopped before the door of a principal burgess, by whom he was received with all the honours due to a knight errant. His horse was conducted to the best stall in the stable; and the burgess, his family and servants, were all in motion to provide for him the best means of accommodation: but the knight, hastily dismounting, and refusing the offer of an escort, immediately passed through the city, and, approaching the castle, examined all its avenues, and readily discovered the gardens, the arbours, and the lady's bower, which perfectly agreed with Sir Eger's description. He had not waited long when

* probably Galloway.

he also saw the lady, whom he instantly recognised and accosted as an old acquaintance, producing at the same time the *silken sark*, which she had bestowed upon his friend, together with the present of jewels; at the sight of which the beautiful Lillias inquired, with the most tender solicitude, after the health of the knight who had sent her these tokens.

Sir Graham had determined to personate his friend, whom he nearly resembled in figure, and whose voice he was able to imitate very exactly. He had altered, by means of an ointment, the colour of his skin; had carefully concealed his hair; and, confiding in his disguise, answered without hesitation that he was the knight who was so much indebted to her for the restoration of his health and life. Lillias, overjoyed at this assurance, earnestly requested him to accompany her to her bower, where he had been already entertained; but the knight, foreseeing that this must lead to a discovery of the artifice, replied that he had already taken up his inn within the town, and must defer his visit to her till he should have accomplished the object to his adventure. Astonished at this refusal she surveyed him with an air of doubt, and hastily pulling down his glove, and perceiving that his hand was entire,

exclaimed with an air of indignation, that she was no longer surprised at the precipitation with which the knight had formerly returned home;

" For here such leeching is there none!
" There is no leech, in all this land,
" Can put a finger to a hand!
" The finger that he left *in wed* *,
" That has another in its stead,
" Both as fair, as whole, as clean
" As ever it was or yet had been!
" Ye should not, Sir, in a strange land,
" Mock, nor yet be *over-bourdand* †;
" But, if ye will with bourdings deal,
" Right cleanly than ye should them veil—"

and, having continued for some time in the same strain, threw down his present of jewels with contempt, and hastily turned from him to depart.

During the early part of this conversation, Sir Graham had contemplated with great attention and pleasure the mild and benevolent features of the beautiful Lillias: but her animation gave them

* in pawn. † too fond of raillery.

such additional charms; the blush of indignation in her cheeks was so becoming; and her fine eyes kindled into such dazzling brilliancy, that before the conclusion of her lecture he found himself most seriously enamoured of the fair preacher. To part with her thus was impossible. He seized her hands, detained her in spite of her struggles, and forced her to hear his whole story, which he related with perfect veracity. Lillias was for a time incredulous; but Sir Graham, now in love for the first time, was become so eloquent and persuasive that she could not disbelieve him. Of his approaching conflict with Sir Gray-steel he spoke in terms of rational confidence, not disparaging the prowess of his adversary, but trusting to the justice of his cause; he dwelt much on the accomplishments and merits of Sir Eger, on his brilliant valour, on his truth and constancy to his mistress, on his steady and cordial friendship, but passed over as a thing of course his own disinterested generosity in devoting his own life for the gratification of his friend. This last point, however, was not lost upon the gentle Lillias, who began to survey him, if not with love, at least with very sincere admiration. Their quarrel was now ended, and it was agreed that instead of returning to the city he should sup in the lady's

bower, and be lodged in the same bed which had been formerly occupied by Sir Eger.

After a plentiful repast, the lady began to relate, in her turn, the history of her misfortunes. She had once a brother whom she tenderly loved; an admirer for whom she felt a no less ardent affection; and both had fallen beneath the sword of the inhuman Gray-steel. She could not pronounce that hated name without torrents of tears; Sir Graham could not behold those tears without feeling the most anxious impatience to encounter the wicked champion who caused them to flow, nor without the secret hope of obtaining by his destruction that place in her heart, which, by her own confession, was now unoccupied. She unconsciously repeated, again and again, the same story, because Sir Graham continued to listen with unabated attention, and because she reflected with increasing terror on the fatal prowess of Gray-steel, and thought that she could not insist too often on the caution, as well as on the determination, with which it was necessary to encounter that dreadful antagonist. The night rapidly wore away, and Sir Graham would have been glad to pass the whole of it in conversation; but the lady at length dismissed him to his bed, where he lay without closing his eyes, his imagination being

employed, sometimes in picturing the amiable Lillias, sometimes in representing his adversary prostrate at his feet. At last the day broke, and never had he wished so anxiously for its arrival. The dawn was ushered in by the songs of birds from the neighbouring arbours, and by the still more welcome approach of his lady, who, attended by her two maidens, brought a long train of baked meats and spiced wines, of which he was compelled by their importunate kindness to swallow a reasonable quantity.

Sir Graham being now ready to depart, the lady exclaimed;

" Sir Graham! ah knight of aventure!
" In press, think on your paramour!
" I will not bid you think on me;
" Think on your love, wherever she be,
" And on your friends that are at hame,
" And on your guesting you have ta'en.
" And here your supper shall be dight,
" I think ye shall be here at night.
" Think not Gray-steel, albeit he wold,
" Shall hinder you your *tryst* * to hold!"
He said, " Lady, so God me rede,
" An if ye would, he shall not speed!"

* place of appointment.

Lillias sent a page to accompany him to his inn, and, with the page, a large bottle of her best and strongest wine, which he was ordered to fasten to the saddle-bows. The horse, who had fed as plentifully and had slept more soundly than his master, appeared impatient for action; and Sir Graham, vaulting into the saddle, began his march, accompanied by the applause and pity of numerous spectators.

Women weeped sore for the knight
When he passed out of their sight;
They trowed he would be in that stead,
Where many men had left their head.
Ere it was mid-morn of the day,
He came where that the place did lay
Which was called "the land of doubt;"
A forest lying round about.
*In Roman stories who will read**,
Two miles of length and two of *brede*.
He saw no thing into that stead,
But great felon dun deer and red.
He saw beside him, on a height,
A fair castel, with towers wight,

* This looks like a reference to the Gesta Romanorum, but I cannot find in that work any allusion to the present history.

A deep river, long and brade:
Was never one that over it rade,
(That had not Sir Gray-steel his leave)
That came again without *repreave* *.
Sir Graham he looked not to that,
But sought a ford, and that he gat.
When he was on the other side,
Then fair and *hulie* † could he ride.
He rode the two-part of the land,
And nothing found he there stirrand.
He 'lighted on his foot, and stood,
To ease his horse and do him good.
His spear he sticked, it was so lang;
His shield upon his saddle hang;
Syne, drank of wine, and made good cheer;
Then thought upon his lady dear;
And then, no longer would he bide,
But near the castle can he ride, &c.

Sir Gray-steel, informed by his spies that an adventurous knight awaited him in the forest, at length issued from his castle, clad in his red armour, and mounted on his powerful bay horse, whose footsteps shook the ground to a considerable distance. Sir Graham, who had been long lost in thought, started from his reverie, recog-

* reproof, here used for defeat. † slowly.

nised the hateful enemy of his friend and of his mistress, defied him to mortal combat, and, firmly grasping his lance, rode at full speed to the encounter. So true was his eye, and so well had he directed the weapon, that the hitherto invincible Gray-steel was thrown to a distance on the field. He rose, however, unhurt, and drawing his sword ran furiously to meet Sir Graham, who having sprung from his horse advanced towards him, anxious to terminate as quickly as possible a conflict on which his life was staked. But though eager he was not precipitate; he husbanded his strength, and waited till he was sure of his aim; when discharging a dreadful blow on the helmet of his antagonist, he drove the metal into the scull, and inflicted a dreadful wound. But Gray-steel, long inured to combats, and losing all sense of pain in the desire of revenge, struck at the same instant the shoulder of Sir Graham, and with such power that he dropped on one knee, and scarcely recovered with his left hand the sword which was slipping from his right. The victory, therefore, was still undecided; and the two champions at first appeared to be equally enfeebled: but in a short time the anguish of Sir Gray-steel's wound became almost intolerable; his brain became giddy, his stomach sickened, and his sight

grew confused; while Sir Graham, whose arm had been benumbed and rendered senseless by the first shock, gradually recovered his vigour. Aware of this advantage, from the ill-directed blows of his adversary, he called on him to yield himself and sue for mercy; but the indignant Gray-steel replied by a fierce and haughty defiance, and, raising his sword with both hands, dealt such a blow on the head of Sir Graham that the blood burst from his nose, and he staggered a few paces backward: he however soon recovered himself, and, discharging a back-stroke on the throat of his enemy, nearly severed the head from the body.

Gray-steel into his death thus *thraws* *;
He *walters* †, and the grass up-draws;
His arms about him could he cast,
He pulled herbes and roots fast.
A little while then lay he still,
(Friends that him saw liked full ill)
And bled into his armour bright.

While Sir Gray-steel was expiring in convulsions, the victor repaired to his horse, and, taking the bottle from his saddle-bow, swallowed a copious draught of wine, the gift of the provident

* draws? † tosses, welreis, tumbles, Sib. Glos.

Lillias. He then hastily returned to his slaughtered enemy; cut off the right hand, which he placed in its mailed gauntlet; put on his own head the golden helmet of Sir Gray-steel; and, having adjusted the two shields on the saddle of his own horse, whom he led in his right hand, mounted the bay charger, and hastened from the field of battle, lest he should be molested in his retreat by a sally of Sir Gray-steel's adherents from the neighbouring castle.

Though he rode as fast as he could, it was night before he reached his inn in the city, from whence he departed in the morning. He was immediately attended by crowds of inhabitants, who pressed forward to behold the wonderful knight who had achieved the adventure of "*the land of doubt*," and brought off the spoils of the terrible Gray-steel. The golden helmet, on which no former champion had been able to make any impression, passed from hand to hand; the great bay steed with his golden saddle, and the shields with the bearings of the two knights, were anxiously examined; but curiosity was particularly busy with the features of Sir Graham, while he was impatient to withdraw himself as soon as possible from the public eye, lest some untoward accident should lead to a discovery of his secret, and deprive his

friend of the honour of the adventure. He called his host, and said, "Though not dangerously hurt, I am wounded, and much fatigued, so as to stand in need of a good leech. Besides, though Sir Gray-steel is dead, his friends may seek to revenge him, and, if they learn that I am lodged in this open town, may accomplish their purpose. I would fain repair to the castle, or to the bower of Lillias, whose skill is well known to me; and request you to conduct me thither, and to take with you the helmet and the glove, which I have engaged to lay at her feet as a proof of my success." The host obeyed, and conducted him to the bower.

When they arrived, they found the gate closed. Within, a table was prepared, at which sat the desponding Lillias accompanied by her damsels. She for a time surveyed the untouched dainties, and then exclaimed,

"He that supper for is dight,
"He lies full cold, I trow, this night!
"*Yestreen* * to chamber I him led;
"This night Gray-steel has made his bed!" &c.

After these and similar reflections she relapsed

* yesterday evening.

into her melancholy reverie, which was interrupted by the voice of the burgess, who solicited admittance. One of the maidens replied, that at such an undue hour he could only gain access to her mistress by going round through the castle, where the key was always lodged; but he insisted, declaring himself the messenger of the adventurous knight who had left them in the morning, and answering their questions in such a manner as to prove the truth of the assertion. Lillias now interfered, observing that she rejoiced in the knight's return, and would have been happy to receive him with every attention; but that, since he preferred his inn in the town, she did not wish for any communication with his messenger. Sir Graham, ashamed of having so far trifled with her kindness, excused himself by declaring that the darkness of the night had compelled him to take a guide; but that he had not lost a moment in the town, having immediately hastened to thank her for her hospitality, and once more to implore her assistance.

At the sound of his voice, all obstacles vanished; the doors flew open; and even the burgess was overpowered with caresses; while the knight was assailed by a rapid succession of questions, which he answered as shortly as he could, assu-

ring the lady that he had constantly thought on her during the combat, and that to her image he had been, under the blessing of Providence, indebted for his victory. Lillias, during the stay of his guide, could only thank him by a look of love and gratitude; but, having dismissed the burgess, repeated all her questions for the purpose of hearing a repetition of the same answer, and was preparing to make a similar avowal of her tenderness, when the bloody hand of Gray-steel inclosed in its mailed gauntlet met her eyes, and, awakening the recollection of her former misfortunes, drew from her a flood of tears. She now reproached herself with forgetting, for a moment, that the formidable Gray-steel could not have fallen quite unrevenged; that his sword, which never descended in vain, could not have suddenly lost its edge; and that her lover in all probability was severely, perhaps dangerously, wounded. She called her damsels to assist in unlacing the knight's armour, examined the grievous hurt in his shoulder, shuddered at the sight, and with a trembling hand began to apply the necessary remedies; while she avowed, with perfect simplicity of heart, her unbounded admiration of the virtues and affection for the person of her patient. "Might I," said she, "impart to my father, on whose secrecy you

may confidently rely, the history of what you have done, he would be ready, I am sure, to reward, even with the present of all his lands, the conqueror of the ferocious Gray-steel!" "I ask nothing, fair Lillias, but your hand." "And that shall be yours," replied she, "when you think fit to claim it. I will now leave you to my damsels, who will serve you with spice and wine, and will return with my father as soon as you shall have resumed your armour and be ready to receive him."

The earl was still in the hall. Supper being ended, the minstrels had begun their music, to which, however, he paid no attention, his mind being painfully occupied by the recollection of his misfortunes, and by incoherent projects of vengeance against the cruel Gray-steel. He paced silently backwards and forwards in the hall, his knights respectfully forbearing to intrude on his reverie, when Lillias suddenly entered with an air of giddy gaiety, and, having inquired into the cause of his melancholy, promised him immediate consolation, and proceeded to relate the whole story of Sir Eger, of his defeat, of the relief which she had afforded him, of the subsequent adventure of his brother in arms, and of the destruction of Gray-steel, whose helmet and shield,

together with his bloody hand, were then in her bower. "And where," exclaimed the earl, "is the astonishing youth who has destroyed the ferocious monster?" "He also," replied Lillias, "is in my bower, but means to depart at day-break. Will my father condescend to visit him?" The earl instantly seized the hand of the countess, and, following his daughter, advanced towards the knight, who saluted him most respectfully; after which he dropped on his knees, returned thanks to God, and, addressing Sir Graham, exclaimed,

"On you be worship and honour!
"Of fortune you have won the flower,
"So doughtily as ye have 'sailed;
"And that many therof have failed.
"Therefore, to God a gift I give
"Everlasting, that, while I live,
"It shall be yours all that is mine!"
The lady made the knight a sign:
The knight kneeled full courteously,
And said, "Then, lord, this young lady,
"I will now ask her for my wage,
"And have her into marriage."

The earl and countess readily gave their con-

sent. It was agreed that Sir Graham should receive her hand as soon as he should have accomplished his adventure; and during seven days, which were employed in completing the cure of his wound, the helmet and shield of Gray-steel were publicly exhibited at court, and it was announced that the hand of Lillias was destined to the unknown knight who had revenged the death of her brother.

On the eighth day Sir Graham departed before the dawn, and, travelling with all possible expedition, reached the foot of the mountains before night, and had the good fortune to obtain an excellent lodging in a small town, in the house of a burgess whom he overtook on the road. Here he was informed, by a very loquacious hostess, that he was still in the land of Gallias, (Galloway?) and that the whole country between the mountains and the sea was dependent on the father of Lillias; so that his sleep, it may be presumed, was rendered much sweeter by the image of his amiable mistress. He then was guided by his host to the edge of the moorlands, and received from him a supply of provisions for the next four days; during which, guiding himself by means of his old land-marks, he travelled over a desert country, seeing nothing but

——— great mountains on his right hand,
Both does and roes dun and red,
And harts, ay casting up their head,
Bucks that brays, and harts that *hailes* *,
And hinds running into the fields;
And he saw neither rich nor poor,
But moss, and ling, and bare wild moor
So it was, that four days and mare,
Ere he could win to Sir Eger,
Who lived into great distress,
'Biding at home in *langsameness* †.
Then came he home within the night,
And no man got of him a sight.

The joy of Sir Eger at the return of his friend was extreme, and the remainder of the night was almost wholly spent in the recital of his adventures in the land of doubt and in the principal castle of Gallias. At length, however, it became necessary that Sir Graham should retire to his repose; and it was agreed that Sir Pallias should, at the dawn of day, repair to court to notify the return of the supposed Sir Eger, and that the knight himself should speedily follow, arrayed in his armour, and bearing with him the trophies of his victory. A return so triumphant

* brays? † listlessness.

was likely to captivate once more the vain mind of Winliane; but her lover was strictly enjoined to treat her with the same scorn which she had manifested towards him during his misfortunes; and as experience had now taught him the necessity of such conduct, he performed his part with sufficient asperity, rejected the kiss which she offered, and loudly assured her before the whole court, that a heart so vain and versatile as hers was not worth his acceptance.

Winliane, equally disconcerted and astonished by this reception, hastened with her complaints to Sir Graham. "My lord, Sir Eger," said she, "is grievously offended with me, but without cause. If I have erred, it was through a natural and excusable mistake; for how could I suspect, when he returned discomfited from the former battle, that he was capable of the brilliant enterprise which he has now achieved?" Sir Graham, far from consoling her, answered with an air of compassion, that his friend appeared to have transferred his whole affection to the lady whom he had met during his first adventure, and who, having greatly assisted him in this last journey, had strong claims on his love and gratitude. Sir Eger entered the room, and by his careless and even sarcastic manner confirmed her belief in Sir

Graham's pretended suspicions; and the lady, completely humbled, retired to her chamber accompanied by Sir Pallias, who vainly attempted to intercede with Sir Eger in her favour, and who firmly believed that she could not long survive, under the torment of the conflicting passions by which she was agitated.

Sir Graham, however, had no intention of delaying the negotiation, but only meant to effect it in his own way; and directed Sir Eger to go and amuse himself during some hours in the forest, promising him at his return the hand of his mistress, together with complete and public satisfaction for the affronts which he had received from her. He then repaired to Winliane, and, after alarming her by the assurance that his friend's short expedition into the forest was only preparatory to his final departure, which would probably take place in a few days, observed that she might possibly turn this incident to her advantage. "Sir Eger," said he, "once loved you most entirely, and I suspect that some remains of that passion still lurk within his breast, though suppressed by pride and indignation. The insult which you offered him was as public as it was cruel and unprovoked; let your contrition be equally notorious. Assemble all the ladies of the

city; put yourself at their head; meet him in solemn procession; fall on your knees before him, and entreat his forgiveness. Be assured that, if your foolish pride do not again interfere, Sir Eger will be your own." Winliane, who had lost all hopes of attaining the great object of her life by marrying a hero, eagerly accepted the conditions, and executed them most scrupulously. The wedding was concluded in the course of the day, and was followed, as usual, by a series of festivities which lasted during a fortnight.

Sir Graham, having thus secured the happiness of his friend, became anxious to fulfil his own engagements with the amiable Lillias. But it was impossible that he should depart unobserved, and it was difficult to invent a plausible reason for quitting his "brother in arms" at such a moment, without exciting suspicions in the mind of Winliane. But the knight had foreseen these difficulties, and his inventive genius had devised a stratagem by which they were effectually removed.

Sir Eger was directed to inform his bride, in seeming confidence, that during his last expedition against Sir Gray-steel he had bound himself by a vow to return into that country, or to find some good knight as his substitute, for the purpose of

accomplishing an adventure of great importance to the heiress of Gallias. Winliane, therefore, suspecting that this lady was the rival to whom Sir Graham had often alluded, was very anxious to divert her husband from the project of making this dangerous visit, and earnestly entreated him to intrust the adventure to Sir Pallias; but Sir Eger having observed that his brother, though sufficiently brave, was too fond of pleasure, and particularly too much addicted to wine, for such an important commission, and that Sir Graham alone could be trusted as his substitute, she resolved to persuade Sir Graham, if possible, to accept it. She offered him any portion of her father's treasures which he might think necessary for the journey, together with as many attendants as he might require; and, when she saw him depart at the head of a splendid retinue, rejoiced not a little at the success of her negotiation.

Sir Graham, after a prosperous journey, arrived at the city of Garrace, the residence of his amiable mistress; and, having left Sir Hugh, his attendant knight, together with his fifty squires, at the inn which he had formerly occupied, proceeded with his host to the bower of Lillias. On the following morning he marched at the head of his company to hear mass, and to pay his court

with becoming deference to the earl and countess, who received him with sincere satisfaction, and at the expiration of a few days, which were employed in making preparations for the nuptials, bestowed on him the hand of their lovely and accomplished daughter. The wedding was followed, as usual, by magnificent tournaments, and the rejoicings throughout the earl's dominions were universal and sincere; his subjects anticipating the prospect of many years of glory and security under the protection of the invincible Sir Graham.

Nothing was now requisite to gratify every wish of his heart, but the company of his friend Sir Eger, who, on receiving the first intimation of his desire, collected a company of a hundred squires and knights, departed with his beloved Winliane for Garrace, and was welcomed by a series of festivities more magnificent than the country of Gallias had ever before witnessed. Here therefore it should seem that the author would have done well to terminate his recital; but he has judged otherwise, and we must endeavour to follow him to the conclusion.

The scene of joy which followed the meeting of the two friends was suddenly interrupted by the illness of Sir Graham; and so rapid was the

progress of the disease, that a few days conducted him to his grave. The tender and affectionate Lillias, exhausted by the fatigue of incessant watching, and stunned by the weight of this irremediable calamity, beheld the preparations for his funeral in silent anguish, and seemed nearly as lifeless as the corpse which was deposited in the grave; but the impetuous Sir Eger, yielding to the violence of his grief, threw himself on the body with loud exclamations, and then proceeded to justify the excess of his sorrow by relating the whole extent of his obligations to Sir Graham, the real conqueror of Gray-steel, whose generosity was still more unexampled than his valour. Nothing could exceed the astonishment and indignation of Winliane at this unexpected recital. She loudly protested that she could not forgive herself for having, though unknowingly, shared the bed of a beaten champion; that she henceforth abjured his company for ever; that she should now carry her shame and misery to a religious house, and hoped to be freed by a speedy death from the hated recollection of her husband. This wish was fulfilled; and before the end of two years she expired in a convent. In the mean time Sir Eger, scarcely conscious of her absence, but inconsolable for the loss of his friend, deter-

mined to bear arms against the infidels. He repaired to Rome, received the papal absolution, passed over to the island of Rhodes, soon raised himself by his valour to the command of the Christian army, and during two successive campaigns obtained so many brilliant victories, that all Europe resounded with the fame of his talents and success. But neither wealth nor glory could compensate for the death of his friend. He resigned his command, and returned towards his own country; but, having heard on his road the fate of Winliane, repaired to the capital of Gallias, where he found in the amiable Lillias a companion in his grief, who was always ready to expatiate on the merits of the accomplished Sir Graham. By degrees the two mourners began to feel that each was less miserable when the other was present; and as one only means occurred to prevent their future separation, and to preserve the rich and unprotected widow from the addresses of importunate suitors, they finally agreed to unite their hands and fortunes. The author concludes by beseeching "Jesus, heaven's king,"

> To grant them grace, and good to spend;
> And love aye, while their latter end!

SIR DEGORÉ.

THIS romance is of high antiquity, being preserved in the Auchinleck MS. It is also contained in Bishop Percy's folio. The following abstract is made from a transcript of the black letter copy in Garrick's collection (K. ix.), by W. Copland; containing 996 lines. The title in the Auchinleck MS. is more properly written Sir *Degare*, i. e. Dégaré, or L'égaré; the name being intended to express (as the author tells us, in line 230,) "a thing [or person] almost lost."

THERE was once a king of England *, who was excessively fond of tournaments, because it had

* By this appellation the author does not seem to mean any king of the whole island. His heroes do not cross the sea, but only travel a *long* way to the westward. Perhaps his king may have been some Saxon chieftain in Northumberland, and his heroes either Welsh or Gaelic.

never happened to him to be overthrown, and he was amused by tumbling his adversaries into the dust. His love of this recreation was only equalled by his affection for his only daughter, a young lady of exquisite beauty; and as numberless kings, princes, and lords, were induced to become her suitors, partly on account of her charms and accomplishments, and partly "for love of her great heritage," he contrived to gratify both his tastes at once, by making a decree, that no man should receive the hand of the princess until he had justed with the king, and caused him to lose his stirrups. In a short time there were few persons of distinction in Europe who had not been unhorsed by the king of England; and the well-wishers to the fair princess began to apprehend that she would with difficulty find a husband.

The king, it may be presumed, never heard this prognostic, and was by no means impatient for the marriage of his daughter. Her company consoled him for the want of her mother, who had lost her life in bringing her into the world, and whom he regretted so sincerely that he never could be induced to enter upon a second marriage. He had even instituted an annual fast in honour of her memory; and, attended by his daughter and by his whole court, repaired to the distant church

where the remains of his beloved wife were interred, and spent the day in prayers for her soul, and in acts of charity to the poor.

On one of these occasions the princess, who with her attendants formed the rear of the procession, suddenly called to her chamberlain to stop, for the purpose of arranging some part of her dress, which had been disordered by the motion of her horse. The delay was short; but they were travelling through a forest, so that they had soon lost sight of the procession; and inadvertently taking a wrong road, and quickening their pace, they were completely bewildered before they discovered their error. There was now no resource but to stop and listen. The weather was intensely hot. They alighted, and lay down on the grass. By degrees their attention slackened, and they all fell asleep, excepting the princess, who, delighted by the songs of the birds, and attracted by the beauty of the wild plants by which she was surrounded, wandered from flower to flower, and, insensibly losing her way a second time, found herself quite alone in the midst of a trackless solitude. She was now dreadfully alarmed, and began to apprehend that the beasts of the forest would shortly seize and devour her, when she beheld a stranger knight in a splendid hunting-dress,

who, advancing towards her, declared that he had long been in love with her, and that, finding her thus in his power, he was determined to use the opportunity, and to treat her as his mistress. Her screams and resistance were equally ineffectual, and the audacious stranger, having accomplished his purpose, thus addressed her:

He said, "Madame, gentil and free,
"With child I wot well that ye be.
"Well I wot it shall be a knave;
"Therefore my swerde he shall have,
"My good swerde of *ameaunt**;
"For therewith I slew a geaunt.
"I brake the point in his heved,
"And in the field I it leaved.
"Dame, take it up; lo it is here;
"For thou speakest not with me this many a
"year!
"And yet, per aventure, time may come,
"That I may speak with my son,
"And by this swerde I may him ken."
He kissed his love, and wente then.

The princess, stupefied with terror and astonish-

* probably a mistake for adamant.

ment, gazed in silence on her ravisher, till the trees concealed him from her sight; and then, picking up the sword which had cost her so dear, endeavoured to explore the way to her companions, and fortunately found them still immersed in a deep sleep. It was necessary, in the first place, to compose her countenance, and to conceal under her robe the fatal sword; after which she awakened her chamberlain and her maidens, ordered them to mount, and, having shortly encountered some of the messengers whom the king had dispersed through the forest in search of her, was at length safely conducted to the chapel, and from thence accompanied by her father to the palace.

The adventures of this disastrous day were so obscurely traced in the lady's recollection, that when abandoned to solitude and silence she almost persuaded herself that the whole was no more than a frightful dream. But the sword remained in her possession, an unimpeachable witness to the truth. She also now recollected that the knight had thrown into her bosom a pair of gloves, assuring her at the same time that they were enchanted. She put them on, and found that they adapted themselves to the shape of her hand no less accurately than the skin which they covered; nor was it long be-

fore she was convinced, by a train of symptoms which could not be mistaken, that her ravisher had strictly adhered to truth in assuring her of her pregnancy.

To escape detection, without the assistance of an accomplice, would have been impossible; she therefore communicated the fearful secret to one of her damsels, who shortly proved herself worthy of the confidence, by adopting such multiplied precautions that the princess was actually delivered of a son without having excited for a moment the smallest degree of suspicion. The child was instantly conveyed to the damsel's apartment, where it was richly dressed and placed in a cradle, together with the pair of gloves, twenty pounds of gold, and ten pounds of silver. To these means of securing for her child a favourable reception the careful mother added a letter.

She knit the letter with a thread
About his neck, a full good speed.
Then was in the letter writ,
(Whoso it founde should it witte)
" For Christis love, if any good man
" This woful childe finde can,
" Do him be christened of priestes hand!

" And to-help him to live in land,
" With this silver that is here,
" Till he may armes bear,
" And helpe him with his owne good;
" For he is cómè of gentil blood."

The damsel only waited for the hour of night, when, stealing from the palace, she conveyed the child in its cradle to the door of a hermit's cell in the forest, and returned in a few hours to comfort the mother by the assurance of its safety.

They were aware that the hermit, being accustomed to rise frequently in the night to his prayers, was likely to hear the first cries of the infant. In fact, he did so; and, having perused the letter, and carefully locked up the gloves and the money, christened the child by the name of Degoré, and conveyed it to the house of his sister, who resided in a neighbouring town, for the purpose of being nurtured. Here the boy remained ten years, after which he was sent back to the hermitage; where the hermit " taught him of clerke's lore" during ten more years, and then, having revealed to him the secret of his birth, and given him the gloves and the money which remained after defraying the expenses of his education, dismissed him with his

benediction, and advised him to spare no pains in searching for his father.

The youth had received from nature an athletic frame, and had acquired strength and activity by constant exercise and exposure to the weather during his rustic education in the forest. He had been well instructed by the hermit in his religious duties, and even in the laws and customs of courtesy; but the good man had been unable to teach him the exercises of chivalry, from the want of a proper suit of armour, with which, however, he advised him to provide himself at the first convenient opportunity. In the mean time Degoré was armed with a ponderous and knotty club, a weapon on which he placed, not without reason, considerable reliance; and he had scarcely advanced a day's march through the forest, when he had the good fortune to discover a knight, of a noble appearance, engaged in single combat with a huge dragon.

Then was there a dragon great and grim,
Full of fire, and also venym,
With a wide throat and tushes great,
Upon that knight fast gan he beat:
And as a lion then was his feet,
His tail was long and full unmeet.

Between his head and his tail
Was twenty-two foot, withouten fail.
His body was like a wine-tun,
He shone full bright against the sun.
His eyen were bright as any glass,
His scales were hard as any brass;
And thereto he was necked like a horse:
He bare his head up with great force.
The breath of his mouth that did out blow,
As it had been a *fire on low**.
He was to look on, as I you tell,
As it had been a devil of hell.

The knight had defended himself for some time with great intrepidity: but as his sword made no impression on the dragon's scales, he was compelled to implore the assistance of Degoré; who, instantly stepping forward, began to cudgel the monster with such rapidity, that, though the scales still resisted, they were unable to preserve him from a number of very disagreeable bruises. The youth indeed was much annoyed by his enemy's long tail, which lashed him severely: but having successively broken the animal's legs, he at length concluded the combat by dashing out his brains;

* a blazing fire.

and then attended the knight, who was moreover a powerful and wealthy earl, to his palace, where, in addition to a sumptuous entertainment, he received the offer of a considerable investiture, together with the hand of the earl's only daughter in marriage. "Sir," said he, "let me see your fair daughter, and all the ladies of your court. If she, or any of them, can put on a certain pair of gloves, which I carry in my pocket, I will accept your offer; if not, I must take my leave." The experiment was made without success; and the young adventurer departed, after receiving, as the reward of his services, the order of knighthood, an excellent war-horse, a complete suit of armour, a page to attend him, and a palfrey.

Continuing his progress through the forest, he at length met the heralds from the king of England, who, it seems, had still continued to just with the same success, and whose daughter perhaps, after an interval of twenty years, had ceased to attract such a crowd of suitors. Sir Degoré listened with great interest to the recital of the king's long succession of victories,

> And thought, "He was a doughty man!
> "And I am in my yonge blood,
> "And I have horse and armour good,

" And, as I trowe, a feel good steed;
" I will assay if I may speed!
" An I may beare the king down,
" I may be a man of great renown;
" And if that he me fell can,
" There knoweth no body what I am.
" Death or life, whatso betide,
" I will once against him ride!"

Having formed this resolution, he rode into the city, and, having taken up his inn, sent his page to the king, to solicit the honour of the combat. The challenge was joyfully accepted, and the next day appointed for the encounter.

On the knight's appearance in the lists, it was immediately admitted by the king, and by all the assembly, that the prize had never yet been disputed by a champion of so much promise. Sir Degoré, conscious of his inexperience, and diffident of his strength, but persuaded that the event of a tournament was always decided by the particular interposition of Heaven, had devoutly attended mass, and humbly offered three florins to the three persons of the trinity,—in consequence of which he felt confident of victory; whilst the king, long accustomed to conquest, and presuming on the usual effects of his matchless skill and vigour,

no less confidently anticipated an easy triumph. Sir Degoré received on his shield the first lance of his assailant, without being at all moved, though his own lance was so ill directed that it totally failed of its effect. His second attempt was not more fortunate; for he again missed his blow, and received the king's weapon against his breast: his horse was suddenly stopped in his charge; reared, and was near falling backwards on his rider. At the third career he took truer aim; the two champions met at full speed, and their spears shivered in their hands. The king now lost his temper, and with it lost all his advantage: seizing a more ponderous lance, and spurring forward with blind precipitation, he missed Sir Degoré in his turn, and was thrown, together with his horse, to some distance on the ground.

The numerous spectators were much astonished, and the princess seriously alarmed by this unexpected termination of the combat; but the king himself, true to the word which he had pledged before his barons, courteously assured Sir Degoré, whom he accosted by the name of "fair son," that, if his birth and education corresponded with his prowess, he should be happy in bestowing on such a man the hand of his daughter, together with the right of succession to all his dominions.

He then, with the same frankness, proceeded to the execution of his promise, and led the parties from the place of combat to the cathedral, where the knight was solemnly married to his own mother. A magnificent banquet was prepared in the great hall, where the guests were as noble, and the minstrels as numerous and noisy, as usual; and at the close of this day of fatigue and festivity the monarch, having accompanied the married couple to the bridal apartment, was preparing to leave them, when Sir Degoré uttered an exclamation of grief and horror,

> And said anon, with heavy cheer,
> "Me had liever than all my kingdom dear,
> "That now is seized into my hand,
> "That I were faire out of this land!"

As such a speech, on such an occasion, was rather enigmatical, and by no means flattering, the king naturally inquired whether there was any circumstance at which he had taken offence; and the youth answered, that he had made a vow not to marry any woman who could not put on a certain pair of gloves, which he usually carried about him. Now the laws of chivalry peremptorily required the accomplishment of a vow, though

it should not be very consonant to common sense; and as it was natural that the young knight, at the time of leaving his inn, should have been solely occupied about fighting his adversary, whose hands the gloves could not possibly fit, and should have therefore neglected to take them with him, courtesy required that the king should patiently expect their arrival. He did so; and no sooner were they produced, than the princess, having drawn them on with great ease, fell down, and began to cry,

> And said, "Lord God! I ask mercy!
> "I am thy mother that did thee bear,
> "And thou art mine own son dear!

This timely and important discovery gave infinite delight to the mother and to the son, but created no small astonishment in the old king; who, however, on hearing all the circumstances of the case, consoled himself for the untoward accident which had formerly befallen his daughter, by reflecting that he had thus become the grandfather of the stoutest *juster* in Europe. The marriage was dissolved as rapidly as it had been contracted, and much more to the satisfaction of the parties concerned; after which Sir Degoré, having

received from the princess the pointless sword, determined to undertake immediately the quest of his father, and departed without any other attendant than his single page, and with no knowledge of his route, excepting that it was necessary to travel constantly to the westward.

By pursuing this direction he soon arrived in a vast forest, where he beheld, during the day, great numbers of wild beasts, and became very solicitous, on the approach of night, to find a better covering and more tranquillity than such a wilderness was likely to afford him. At length he descried, on a commanding eminence, a fair castle, and ordered his page to request, for charity's sake, a lodging during the night. No answer was returned, but

> The draw-bridge was up-drawne tho,
> And the gate stood open also.
> Unto the castel they gan them speed,
> And first he stabled up his steed,
> And then he set up his hackney:
> Enough they found of corn and hay.
> He went about and gan to call,
> Both in the court and eke in hall:
> Neither for love, nor yet for awe,
> Living man none there they saw!

And in the midst of the hall floor
There was a great fire in that hour.
Then said his man, "Lieve, sire,
"I have wonder who made this fire?"
—"If he will come again this night,
"I will him abide, as I am a knight!"
He set him down upon the *des* *,
And made him well at ease.
Then was he ware of one
That in at the door gan gon:
And three maidens, fair and free,
That were trussed up to the knee.
Twain of them bowes did bear,
And two of them charged were
With venysoun that was full good.
Then Sir Degoré up stood,
And blessed them anon-right;
But they spake not to the knight,
But went into the chamber anon,
And shutte the door full soon.
And anon after, therewithal,
There came a dwarf into the hall;
Four foot was the length of him,
His visage was both great and grim;

* The table at the upper end of the hall.

And the hair that on his head was,
It looked as yellow doth in a glass.
With milk-white lace and goodly *blee*,
But full stoutly then looked he.
He ware a surcoat that was green,
With *blaunchemeer** it was furred I ween.
He was well clad and well done;
As a knight's was crooked his shoen†.
He was *large, both of foot and hand*‡,
As any man was in that land.
Sir Degoré looked on him tho,
And to him reverence did do,
And he to him would speak no word,
But made him ready to lay the borde:
He laid the cloth, and set forth bread,
And also wine, both white and red.
Torches in the hall he did light,
All thing ready to supper he dight.
And soon after, with great honoùr,
There came a lady out of her bower,
And with her came maidens fifteen,
Some in red, and some in green.

* black and white fur, *blanche et nere (noire)*.

† These shoes, which became fashionable in the reign of Edw. II., seem to point out the date of the original romance.

‡ I believe that these phrases mean that the dwarf was "liberal and courteous."

Sir Degoré followed anon-right;
And nought she spoke unto the knight,
But yede and washed everychone,
And to supper gan they gone.
The lady was fair and bright;
In the midst of the des she sat down right;
On every side sat maidens five,
Fair and goodly, as any was alive.
"By God!" then said Sir Degoré,
"I have you blessed, and you not me!
"But you seem dumb, by Saint Johan!
"I shall make you speak, and I can."

Having formed this resolution, the knight took his seat immediately opposite to the lady, and began to survey her with great attention. Hitherto he had thought little about women, but from this moment he could think of little else. Though sufficiently hungry, he had not leisure to eat, being fully occupied in gazing on the most beautiful face that he had ever seen, and he gradually became reconciled to the general silence, because it gave no interruption to this amusement. At length however, supper ended, and the lady and her damsels, having washed as usual, retired to their apartments. "Truly," said Sir Degoré, "I will follow them, and look on that lady so long as I shall think fit; and the man who shall attempt

to interrupt my pleasure shall suffer for his interference." With these words he went in pursuit of his mistress, who, entering her chamber, sat down on the bed, and took up her harp. Sir Degoré seated himself by her, and listened to the sounds of the harp, which he thought the sweetest and most soothing sounds that he had ever heard. Their bewitching effect was such, that in a few minutes he fell fast asleep; when the lady, having ordered her attendants to cover him up warm, retired to another room, and left him to his slumbers.

At the dawn of day she returned into his chamber, and, having wakened him, took the liberty of ridiculing him for the want of gallantry which he had shown by sleeping so soundly. The knight excused himself as well as he could, and then insisted that, as she had recovered during the night the use of her tongue, she should now explain to him the reasons of all the strange appearances which he had witnessed since his arrival at her castle. She replied, that if she had before abstained from speaking, it was because her calamities were such as it was scarcely in the power of any single knight to avert. "My father," continued she, "was a rich baron; and being his heiress, with some share of beauty, I was ad-

dressed by many lovers, one of whom was a huge and ferocious giant, whom, on account of his most excessive ugliness, it was impossible to love; but he has determined to obtain my hand by force, and has already exterminated all my male vassals, excepting the sorry dwarf whom you have already seen." At these words she swooned; and, being recovered by her damsels, cast on Sir Degoré a look of such bewitching tenderness, that in a transport of love he vowed to become her knight, and to defend her from the caresses of her monstrous admirer. It was true that he had previously vowed to find his father; but, as he resolved to lose as little time as possible in killing the giant, he hoped to be almost immediately at leisure to achieve the other adventure; his mistress having readily promised to bestow on him her hand and fortune whenever it should suit his convenience to claim them.

Very fortunately for the completion of the knight's projects, the monster made his appearance below the castle walls at the close of this conversation. Sir Degoré hastily put on his armour, mounted his horse, caused the drawbridge to be lowered, and, having crossed it, rode at full speed to meet his rival. But as this was the first giant whom he had ever encountered, he had not pro-

perly estimated the advantage which the monster derived from his enormous mass. The lances of both champions were shivered; but the horse of Sir Degoré had his back broken by the shock, and his rider came to the ground. The giant dismounted to continue the combat on foot; but neither the thickness of his helmet, nor that of his skull, could long resist the edge of the pointless sword urged by the arm of Sir Degoré, who was fighting in sight of his mistress, and moreover was in a great hurry to go in quest of his father. The lady had soon the pleasure of seeing the giant's very ugly head divided from his awkward shoulders, and

> She was as glad of that sight
> As ever was bird of the day-light.

A few minutes brought her into the arms of her new lover, whom she reconducted in triumph to the castle; but the knight, being now freed from all uneasiness on her account, became impatient to fulfil the act of duty which he had undertaken, and, promising to return at the expiration of a year, recommended her to Heaven, and departed on his quest.

Continuing to travel in a western direction

through the forest, he arrived, "after many a long journée," in a cultivated country, and soon beheld a knight in complete armour, and with his vizor closed, advancing toward him. His shield was of gold and azure;

Three boars' heads were therein,
The which were of gold fine.
As soon as ever he saw that knight,
He spake to him anon-right,
And said, "Vilayne! what dost thou here
"In my forest, to slay my deer?"
Sir Degoré said, with wordes meek,
"Sir, of thy deer I take no kepe;
"For I am an aventurous knight,
"That goeth to seek war and fight."

The unknown knight replied, that he had been so lucky as to meet with his match, and, desiring him to arm, waited in silence for the encounter.

All being ready, they exchanged the usual defiance, took their ground, couched their lances, and rushed together with such violence that both their horses were killed by the shock. They then drew their swords, and continued the combat on foot with such fury, but at the same time with so

much skill and address, that, though neither was able to wound his antagonist, both found themselves so exhausted as to be very anxious for a moment's respite, that they might raise their vizors and take breath. The unknown knight spoke first:

" Abide a while, thou gentil knight!
" Where was thou born, and in what land?"
" —Sir," he said, " in England.
" A king's daughter is my mothèr,
" But I wot not who is my fathèr."
" —What is thy name?" then said he.
" —Sir, my name is Degoré."
" —Sir Degoré! thou art welcome!
" For well I wot thou art my son.
" By this sword I know thee here;
" The point is in my *pautenere**."

The father and son, equally rejoiced at this discovery, immediately began their journey towards England; and as two such knights travelling together could not be stopped by any imaginable obstacle, they at length arrived, after a very tedious ride, at the palace of the old king, who was rejoiced to see his grandson Degoré, and still more

* rather *pantonere*, a purse or pocket: v. Du Cange in voce.

rejoiced at finding that he was the son of a powerful and formidable champion. The princess was now married to her unceremonious lover; and after their nuptials the whole party repaired to the castle in the forest, where Sir Degoré was solemnly united to his amiable mistress.

ROSWAL AND LILLIAN.

CONCERNING this romance, which, it is said, continued to enjoy, till within these few years, a high degree of popularity in Scotland, I have obtained no information; and have only seen a single copy of it, which was kindly communicated to me by Mr. Douce. This is printed, but without date or printer's name, and appears to have issued from some provincial press about 80 or 90 years ago. It is in the Scotish dialect. The style has, perhaps, been modernized, and the tale seems to have been awkwardly and carelessly abridged, unless we suppose it to have been printed from a mutilated and imperfect MS. There is, I think, no internal evidence to justify our ascribing its original to an earlier period than the middle of the 16th century.

THERE was once at Naples a *worthy* king, whose name the author has not thought it neces-

sary to mention, but whom he represents as a most suspicious tyrant and unnatural father. By his queen Lillian he had a son named Roswal, a paragon of beauty and of valour.

> Princes to him was no compare
> Wight Hannibal, or Grandefare.

There were also in the king's dominions three lords "of noble worth," whom their sovereign, in consequence of their having opposed his authority, had doomed to perpetual imprisonment, and who, after many years of bondage, continued to languish in the dungeons of the palace. Roswal, whose boyish amusements had been often disturbed by the groans of these unfortunate men, generously determined, at the risk of provoking his father's utmost indignation, to liberate them from confinement: and having found that the keys of the prison were placed, at night, under the king's pillow, very dexterously contrived to withdraw them; and, after dismissing the three prisoners, restored the keys to their place without having at all disturbed his majesty's slumbers.

On the following day the gaolers, having repaired to the prison with the usual pittance of provisions, were not a little astonished at finding the

cell unoccupied, and immediately hastened to their master with the wonderful intelligence. The king was so much incensed, that he solemnly swore to sacrifice the life of the person who had ventured to preserve his intended victims from the effects of his vengeance, even though it should appear that his son Roswal had been implicated in the guilt: but, as the keys had been purloined by the prince without the participation of any accomplice, his delinquency could not have been proved; and the escape of the prisoners might have been attributed to the miraculous interposition of Heaven, if Roswal had not voluntarily confessed himself guilty. Neither the tears of the queen, nor commiseration for his son's youth, could induce the king to recall his vow; but he was at length persuaded to commute the sentence, and to banish the boy; who was immediately sent off to the court of the King of Bealm, attended only by the high steward, an officer whose natural moroseness of temper had singularly charmed his worthy master.

The prospect of a long exile is not very cheerful. Roswal, indeed, had the consolation of reflecting that he was the victim of his generosity; and that he had purchased, though at a high price, the life and liberty of three prisoners: but the steward, who was still young, and much attached

to the pleasures of the court of Naples, had no compensation for his disappointments. He therefore began his journey in more than usual ill-humour, occupied solely by the project of teasing his companion, till a more pleasing scheme occurred to him, by which he hoped to indemnify himself, at the prince's expense, for his present mortification.

He had observed that the king, at parting, had supplied his son with the usual credentials to the court of Bealm, where his person was totally unknown; and had bestowed on him money and jewels sufficient to support him during a year in a manner suitable to his rank: he therefore thought that, by appropriating to himself these credentials and this treasure, he might easily personate the heir of Naples, and thus attain a degree of power and dignity to which he had no natural pretensions. Full of this project, he watched for a favourable opportunity to execute it; and, while the prince, almost fainting with heat and fatigue, stooped from the bank of a river to catch some water in the hollow of his hands, suddenly seized his legs, and with horrid imprecations threatened to plunge him headlong into the torrent, unless he consented instantly to deliver up the money and letters with which he was charged; and moreover promised,

on his word of honour, to conceal from all mankind this nefarious transaction. Roswal, unable to resist, readily submitted to these hard conditions; and the steward, setting spurs to his horse, disappeared in an instant.

The young and healthy soon forget their misfortunes. Roswal, therefore, though sufficiently unhappy at first, because he was tired and hungry, had no sooner gained admission to a hospitable cottage, occupied by a very good-natured and talkative old woman, than he became tolerably reconciled to this second calamity.

She speer'd his name:—"I came from far!
"My name is called Dissawar."
"Oh, Dissawar thou shalt not be,
"For you shall have good help of me."

She perceived at first sight that he was very handsome; and as she thought her son also very handsome, she was soon of opinion that the prince was very like her son, and, to reward him for the resemblance, determined to send them to school together. Here, as he knew more than the village school-master, he soon passed for a prodigy. The high steward of Balm, having heard of his talents, took him as a page, and carried him to

court, where he had no sooner appeared than the king's daughter appointed him her cup-bearer. The old woman was inconsolable for the loss of her adopted child; and even the steward was very sorry to part with a page who, in the course of a few days' service, had made a great progress in his affections: but Lillian, who was an accurate discerner of merit, and most enthusiastic in her admiration of it, lost no time in bestowing her whole heart on the young cup-bearer; and as she was much prettier than the old woman, Roswal was evidently a gainer by the transfer of his services from the cottage to the court.

In the mean time the supposed heir of Naples had not lost his time. Though he had failed to captivate the heart of Lillian, he had most successfully paid his court to the king her father, who had promised him her hand; and a solemn embassy, sent for the purpose of demanding the consent of the king of Naples to the match, was already on the road to that country, when Dissawar, rather unexpectedly, made his appearance in the palace of Bealm, in the character of cup-bearer to the princess. The pretended prince, however, was not disconcerted: he trusted to the solemn promise by which his rivals were bound to secrecy, and waited, full of confidence for the return of

the embassy, by which he hoped to receive the ratification of the marriage. Nor was he disappointed. Dissawar continued true to his engagements; and the king and queen of Naples dismissed the ambassadors with magnificent presents, and with directions to hasten as much as possible the solemnization of the nuptials, which were therefore fixed for an early day, orders being at the same time issued for the celebration of a tournament in honour of the bride.

Whilst the court of Bealm anticipated with transport the approaching festivities, Lillian alone was plunged in despair. Dissawar possessed her whole affections; but his inexplicable character was a principal source of her misery. She was convinced that, because she loved him, he must be nobly born; and frequently urged him to gratify her curiosity, by explaining the mystery, which was certainly concealed under his inauspicious appellation: but though always tender, and full of respect and gratitude, he could not be induced to reveal his secret. As the tournament approached he became more silent and melancholy; Lillian conjured him to enter the lists, and to try the only possible chance of rescuing her from the arms of a man whom she abhorred; but he declared himself utterly ignorant of all knightly exercises, and

unqualified to merit by deeds in arms the kindness which she was pleased to bestow on him.

On the first morning of the festival, determined not to behold the triumph of his enemy, he rose with the dawn, and followed by his hounds repaired to the forest. But the chase could not occupy his attention. He sate musing on his horse, when he was suddenly accosted by a venerable stranger, dressed as a knight, and leading a white war-horse on whose saddle was suspended a suit of appropriate armour. "Prince," said the gray-headed knight, "mount this horse, and clad in these arms repair to the tournament. At thy return thou shalt find me here. I will hunt thy hounds, and present to thee the game which they shall have taken." Dissawar obeyed in silence; bowed to his unknown monitor, set spurs to his horse, entered the barriers, overset all who opposed him, without having once broken his spear, began to charge the steward at full speed,—but, seeing him motionless with fear and astonishment, suddenly checked his horse in the midst of his career, saluted the company, turned round and vanished like a meteor. The king of Bealm exclaimed, with an air of transport, that he would give an earldom to be acquainted with the unknown knight; and all the courtiers who were mounted dispersed

in quest of the stranger. But it was too late. Dissawar, unarmed, and loaded with venison, was already returned to the palace.

Lillian was disposed to be very angry with her lover for amusing himself with the chase whilst her happiness was so seriously at stake; but she had no leisure to reproach him, because the remainder of the day was scarcely long enough for the narrative of what had passed during his absence. She never thought that she had expatiated sufficiently on the valour of the stranger, and on the humiliation of her intended husband; but at length she closed her story, after requesting Dissawar to attend her to the spectacle of the following day. He bowed, but made no promise; being very anxious to know whether the forest contained any more knights who were acquainted with his story, and disposed to provide him with excellent horses and armour of proof. His first benefactor, he was very sure, was no spirit of the woods, but a very substantial old gentleman, and an excellent hunter. Perhaps there might be more persons of a similar disposition in the same forest.

He was not disappointed. A second knight, dressed like the former, and leading a gray horse, accosted him by his name, and ordered him into

the lists. The steward, rejoiced that the vile white knight had not thought fit to appear, hastened to meet this new adversary, and was rewarded for his haste by such a fall that he lay senseless on the ground amidst a crowd of rivals, all of whom were unhorsed with the same facility by the terrible stranger. Dissawar, however, was as punctual as before, to the great astonishment of Lillian, whose penetrating eyes had discovered in the unknown knight a strong resemblance to her lover, but who could not account for his being able to present her with a large supply of newly-killed venison, if, as she supposed, he had been the principal actor in the tournament.

On the third day he was supplied, in a similar manner, with a bay horse, a red shield, green armour, and a golden helmet; gave the steward a second fall, by which he broke two of his ribs, bore down all the other competitors, cast a gold ring into his mistress's lap, and rode at full speed into the forest. Here he found all his three benefactors, who now informed him that they were his own subjects, and the very persons whom he had so generously rescued from prison. They told him that they were well aware of all that he had suffered for their sake, and promised their further assistance, assuring him that the steward should

not much longer prevent his union with Lillian. Thus encouraged, he repaired to the palace, and encountered, without much alarm, the tender reproaches of his mistress, who was now reduced to absolute despair by the prospect of being thrown, on the following day, into the arms of the supposed prince of Naples. As a last resource, she flew to her father, assured him that her heart was unalterably fixed on Dissawar; inveighed against the cowardice of her intended husband; and with a flood of tears requested that the fatal ceremony might be at least deferred until it should appear whether the blood of her lover, whom she firmly believed to be a king's son, was not as noble as that of his competitor. But her tears and eloquence were unavailing. The appointed day arrived; and she was, notwithstanding her reluctance, publicly married to the steward.

The nuptial feast was numerously attended, and Lillian was seated by the side of the bridegroom, on whom, when she ventured to raise her eyes, she cast looks of the most marked abhorrence. Dissawar, in whose countenance she had remarked during the whole ceremony an air of confidence which she could not explain, was not yet present, when three strangers, magnificently attired, entered the hall, and, approaching the upper

table, made their obeisances to the king and to Lillian, but without saluting or appearing to notice the steward. They announced themselves as Neapolitans, and were proceeding in their compliments of congratulation, when the king interrupted them, and asked why they were so inattentive to their prince, the heir of Naples, who was then sitting at table? They answered, that they saw him not; but on the appearance of Dissawar, who then entered the hall, they ran up to him, fell on their knees and kissed his hand, to the great astonishment of the king, and to the utter confusion of the steward, who foresaw that his crimes would now be made public. In fact, they related all that they knew; and Roswal was obliged to confirm their recital, by avowing the victories which he had gained with their horses and armour, while Lillian triumphed not a little at this proof of her skill in physiognomy. The culprit was now seized, and made a public confession of his iniquities: but, as he had been married with all ecclesiastical solemnity to the princess, it was thought most regular and decorous to hang him, without loss of time; after which the hand of his widow was transferred, in due form, to the real Roswal.

The reader will easily foresee that the prince, during the nuptial festivities, which lasted twenty

days, was most profuse in his largesses to the minstrels, bestowed large sums of gold on the charitable old woman who had first received him, conferred a bishopric on her son, amply rewarded the school-master, and procured fresh honours for the good steward who introduced him at court. After this, he became the father of three sons, the two eldest of which inherited the kingdoms of Naples and Realm; the third became pope; and of his two daughters, the first was married to the king of France, and the second to the prince of Apulia.

So Roswal and Lillian sheen
Lived many years in good liking.
I pray to Jesus, heaven's king,
To grant us heaven to our ending.
Of them I have no more to say:
God send them rest untill doom's-day!

AMYS AND AMYLION.

THESE worthy knights were the Pylades and Orestes of the feudal ages. Their story, it may be presumed, was translated from the French; though the translator uniformly refers to the "*Gest*," which, I believe, usually means a Latin original. Our English version is very antient, since a copy of it is preserved in the Auchinleck MS.; but the following abstract was taken from a MS. in the collection of Mr. Douce. It is a romance of considerable length, containing 399 stanzas, of six lines each.

THERE were once two knights in Lombardy, who having been friends from their childhood, and being possessed of two adjoining domains, retired about the same time to their respective castles. Each had married, before his retreat, the lady of

his affections; and it happened, by a singular coincidence, that both their wives were on the same day delivered of sons, one of which was christened by the name of Amys, the other by that of Amylion. These children, of course, became playfellows from their infancy; both were healthy, beautiful, and active; their persons and faces were nearly similar; and this resemblance increased to such an astonishing degree, that, when they had attained twelve years of age, it was become almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

The duke of Lombardy about this time proclaimed a solemn festival, which was attended by all his vassals, and amongst the rest by the two knights, who carried with them the children for the purpose of initiating them in the arts of courtesy. The duke, much amused by the little mistakes which the wonderful resemblance of the two boys daily produced, insensibly became attached to them, and, when their fathers proposed to leave the court, requested that they would intrust him with their future education, assuring them that the two play-mates should not be separated, but fostered together under his eye; and that both, when of a proper age, should be invested with suitable offices, and admitted, at his

expense and by his hands, to the dignity of knighthood. The offer was too advantageous to be refused, and the knights retired, after expressing their gratitude.

Living at the same court, receiving the same instructions, sharing the same amusements, the two friends became attached to each other no less by habit than by inclination; and, wishing, with the enthusiasm so common at their age, to strengthen their union by every possible tie, reciprocally took the oaths by which they became *brothers in arms*; a contract not less holy or less indissoluble than that of marriage between the sexes, and which, identifying as it were the two parties, obliged each to adopt, without hesitation, the resentments or affections of the other, and to hazard life, and even reputation itself, in his service. Their skill in hunting, an exercise considered rather as the occupation and business than as the mere amusement of the great, and their address in all martial occupations, gave them an extensive reputation, and flattered the pride, while it conciliated the affection, of the duke their master; who, having proclaimed a tournament for the purpose of exhibiting their superiority, rewarded their success by investing them with the order of chivalry, and

by appointing Sir Amys to the office of his butler, and Sir Amylion to that of steward to the household; a nomination which gave universal satisfaction, but which awakened the envy of the chief steward, a man of a most malicious character, whose hatred of the young friends produced, as we shall see in the sequel of the story, a long series of misfortunes.

Soon after this event, Sir Amylion received information of the death of his father and mother, and learnt from the messenger that his presence was loudly called for by his vassals. He was therefore under the necessity of quitting his benefactor, and of separating himself from the friend of his childhood; but before his departure he caused two cups of gold to be made, of exquisite workmanship, and exactly similar; one of which he proposed to retain, and destined the other for his brother in arms, as a token of their pure and perfect friendship, and a type of their astonishing resemblance. He then took leave of the duke, who sincerely regretted his loss, and quitted the court, accompanied, during a part of the way, by Sir Amys, who wished to protract as long as possible the moment which was to sever him, perhaps for ever, from his earliest and dearest companion. That moment, however, soon arrived, and after

many tears and embraces Sir Amylion solemnly exclaimed,

" Fro this day forward, ever mo
" Neither fail, either for weal or wo,
" To helpe other at nede!
" Brother! be now true to me,
" And I shall be as true to thee;
" As wise God me speed!"

He then gave him some good advice respecting his future conduct, recommending unshaken fidelity to his lord, and constant caution against the machinations of the wicked steward; and, after leaving with him the golden cup, continued his journey. His timely arrival put an end to all projects of disputing the succession; and having settled his affairs, he shortly after married a beautiful wife, in whose society and affection he hoped to find an indemnification for the loss of his friend and brother.

In the mean time Sir Amys returned to court, where the steward, from whatever cause, received him with every appearance of kindness, and solicited to be admitted into the same sacred contract which had united him with Amylion; but the young knight having civilly rejected his overtures,

alleging that his oaths absolutely precluded him from forming any new engagement, he suddenly threw off the mask.

The fell steward, there he stood,
Almost for wrath he *wex wode** ;
And said, without delay,
And swore, by him that died on rood,
" Thou traitour ! thou wicked blood !
" Thou wilt abye this day !
" I warne thee !" he said than,
" For I am thy strong foe-man,
" By night and by day !"
Sir Amys answered tho,
" I give thereof not one sloe !
" Do right all that thou may !"

The disputants then parted; Sir Amys boiling with wrath, which however soon evaporated; while the steward calculated in silence the most effectual means of producing, with the least possible danger to himself, the destruction of his young enemy.

The duke had an only daughter, whose name was Belisante. She had now attained her fifteenth year; was adored by the duchess, and tenderly beloved by her father, who, that he might give

* became mad.

greater splendour to her introduction into the world, proclaimed a festival, which lasted fourteen days, and brought together all the nobility of the adjoining country. Though the duke still thought her too young to behold the tournaments, she thought herself quite old enough for a lover; and, having questioned her maidens concerning the merit of the several knights who had disputed the prize, was informed that Sir Amys, whose praises she had been accustomed to hear from her tenderest infancy, was still admitted to be perfect and peerless both in valour and in courtesy. Belisante therefore *laid her heart* on Sir Amys; became very sick from sorrow and from *love-longing*, took to her bed, and determined to seize the first opportunity of explaining to her lover her wishes, as well as of gratifying his, if he should make her the proposal.

Sir Amys, in the mean time, was perfectly unprepared for, and thoroughly indifferent to, the happiness which awaited him. Accustomed to consider the daughter of his benefactor as a beautiful and sprightly child, he had neglected to remark the degree to which her charms were matured; and, far from suspecting that her present ailment was the result of unsatisfied love, far less that he was the cause of her indisposition, contented him-

self with the persuasion that it was not dangerous; since her father, by whom she was tenderly loved, did not abstain on her account from the usual amusements of the chase. From these amusements, however, he was himself debarred by an accidental illness; and, during his convalescence, took delight in breathing a cooler and purer air in the shady gardens of the palace, where it is probable that he might have recovered his health without further inconvenience, had not the duchess, by an unfortunate fatality, proposed the same remedy to her daughter.

She said, "Daughter, for love mine,
"Will we wende into the gardyne,
"This ilke summer's day?
"There we may hear the fowles' song;
"For joy, and much mirthes among,
"Thy care shall all away."
Up arose that *bird** bright,
Into the garden she wente right
With maidens hend and free:
That summer's day was fair and bright;
The sun shone; thorough *leme*† of light,
Merry it was to see.

* bride, i. e. young lady. † brightness, Sax.

There heard they fowles great and smale,
The notes of the nightingale,
Merry singing on tree:
But her was so hard y-wrought,
On love-longing was all her thought;
Neither on game ne glee.
Thus the maiden, in that tide,
Walked under the orchard side
To slak her of her care:
Then she saw Sir Amys beside;
Under a bough he gan abide,
To hear mirthes mare.

The young lady immediately seized the opportunity which Fortune presented to her; and, ordering her attendants to retire to some distance, approached the knight, who, on his part, rose to meet her. She then took a seat by his side, and with very little preface requested him to become her *leman*, assuring him that his refusal would infallibly kill her on the spot.

"Thou art," she said, "a gentyl knight,
"And I, a bird in bower bright,
"And of high kin *y-coren**;
"Both by day and by night
"My love is so on thee a-light,

* choice, worthy, &c. Sax.

" My wit is nigh forloren.
" Plight me thy truth, thou shalt be true,
" And never change for no new
" That in this world is born.
" And I shall pledge my truth also
" Till God and death part us a-two
" I shall not be forsworn."
That hende knight stille stood;
For that he changed all his mood,
And said, with wordes free,
" Madame! for him that died on rood!
" As thou art of gentil blood,
" And heir of this land shalt be,
" Think all on thy much honour!
" No kynge's son, no emperour
" Were not too good for thee:
" Certes, then, were it unright
" Thy love to lay upon a knight
" That hath nother land ne fee!"
That merry maiden of great renoun
Answered, " Why had not thou a crown * ?
" For him that bought thee dear,
" Whether art thou priest or chanoun?
" Other, art thou monk, or persoun,
" That preachest me thus here?

* She means the circle of hair produced by ecclesiastical tonsure.

" Thou should have been made no knight
" To go among ladies bright;
" Thou should have been a frere!
" He that taught thee to preach,
" To the devil of hell I him *leteche* *;
" My brother though he were!
" For by him that all this world hath bought,
" All this preaching helpeth thee nought
" Stand thou never so long!
" But thou graunte me my thought,
" My love shall be well dear y-bought
" With paines hard and strong.
" My kerchiefs and my clothes each one
" I shall to-rend them anon,
" And sayen, with much wrong
" That thou hast me all to-draw;
" Then shalt thou, with londes law,
" Be deemed well high to hong!"

Sir Amys listened with some alarm and much astonishment to this torrent of passion. The gentle Belisante, since her escape from the nursery, had made such a wonderful progress in eloquence, that he was much at a loss for an answer; and fearing that by incensing her too far he might induce her to carry her threats into execution, he

* deliver.

thought it advisable to give her time for recollection, and therefore solemnly promised to comply with her request, if after eight days she should still persist in the same resolution. The young lady acceded to this contract; ratified it with a very tender kiss, and gaily returned to her chamber, leaving Sir Amys to prepare for the return of the duke, who was not a little delighted by finding that his sick daughter was now perfectly recovered, insomuch that neither her person nor her manner exhibited the slightest traces of her late indisposition.

The crafty steward, it may be supposed, was not the last to observe or to comment on this very material alteration. It did not escape him that the eyes of Belisante were constantly fixed on Sir Amys; and, as their language was perfectly intelligible, he suspected that she only waited for the absence of her father to throw herself into the arms of her lover; and determined, if possible, to verify his suspicions by becoming a concealed spectator of their next interview. In fact the young lady kept a very exact reckoning of the eight days, during which she had consented to delay the accomplishment of her wishes; and as a hunting-party most fortunately took place at the expiration of the period, she punctually repaired to the knight's apart-

ment, and summoned him to perform his promise. The steward was not less punctual at his place of concealment, from whence he could see and hear all that passed; and, after witnessing on the part of Sir Amys a degree of reluctance which his youth and the beauty of his mistress rendered rather extraordinary, had at length the satisfaction of seeing him yield to the temptation, and hastened to relate the anecdote to the duke on his arrival.

Sir Amys, perfectly unconscious of this treachery, was at his post in the hall of the palace, when he found himself suddenly assaulted by his master with a drawn sword, and had scarcely time to make his retreat into another chamber, the door of which fortunately arrested the duke's weapon, and thus enabled him to hold a parley with his assailant, from whom he learnt, with some difficulty, the cause of this sudden storm of indignation. He had no resource but to deny the fact, which he did so stoutly, offering to prove his innocence by single combat, that the duke ordered the steward to take up the knight's gage, and appointed that day fortnight for the decision of the quarrel. Still, however, it was necessary to find *borrowes* (pledges) for the knight's appearance; and as the power and interest of his adversary intimidated all his friends at court, he was on the point of being ordered

into confinement, when the fearless Belisante exclaimed,

——" That would be much wrong!
" Take my body for the knight,
" Tyl the day be come of fight,
" And doth me in prison strong!
" Gif that knight flee away,
" And dare not uphold his day,
" Batell of him to fong,
" *Dampneth** me, with landes law,
" For his love to brenne and to drawe,
" And high on galowes to hong!"
Then spoke her mother wordes bold,
And said, gladly that she wold
Be his borowe right also,
That he, as a good knight, sholde
That day of batayle upholde,
To fight with his foe.

Two such pledges being unexceptionable, he was left perfectly at large, it being only required that he should make his appearance on the day of combat.

It was with no small surprise that the fair Belisante beheld the gloom which still continued to

condemn.

overspread the brow of the intrepid but conscientious Sir Amys. She represented to him the numberless crimes of the steward, recalled to his memory his own brilliant exploits, and promised him a suit of armour, of such excellent proof that it might insure the success of a far meaner champion: but he answered, with an air of despondence,

" I have the wrong and he the right,
" Therefore I am afear'd to fight,
" As God mote me speed!
" For I mote swear, withouten fail,
" As God me speed, in my batayl,
" That it is false hede;
" And if I swear, I am forsworn;
" Life and soul I am forlorn!
" Certes, I can no rede!"

To these scruples even the logic of the fair Belisante could not oppose any satisfactory answer; but Sir Amys having at length observed that his brother in arms, if apprised of his situation, would, doubtless, assist him and take the battle against the steward, the two ladies immediately conjured him to lose no time, but to set off next morning in quest of Sir Amylion.

The knight obeyed; but, listening only to his impatience, hastened forward with such inconsiderate speed that his horse, after performing something more than half the journey, fell dead with fatigue and hunger. Sir Amys proceeded on foot, and reached at length a forest, distant only a few leagues from his friend's habitation. But here it became impossible to resist any longer the attacks of sleep: he threw himself on the grass, and quietly resigned himself to rest. Luckily Sir Amylion, who had retired to bed at an earlier hour, was much disturbed by a dream, which represented his friend as surrounded by wild beasts and on the point of being devoured; and, finding that the vision persisted in persecuting him, suddenly rose, ordered his horse, and without any attendants rode into the forest.

All night he rode, till it was day,
Till he came there Sir Amys lay
Into the forest wide;
Then saw he a weary man forgone,
Lying under a tree; anon
To him he gan ride.
When he came to him full right,
"Arise, fellow; it is light

" And time for to go !"
Sir Amys *bray'd up with his sight* *,
And soon he knew that gentle knight,
And he did him also.

The two friends now sat down together, and Sir Amys related from beginning to end the history of his amour, and the treachery of the steward, adding that he was very little solicitous about his own life, but wished, if it were possible, to save those of Belisante and the duchess, though he foresaw that this could not be done without the assistance of his brother, since it could not be expected that heaven should permit him to gain the victory, after perjuring himself in a solemn appeal to the justice of his Creator. Sir Amylion listened to the tale with much regret; lamented the impetuous affection of Belisante; execrated the perfidy of the steward; and finally determined to take the battle on himself. " You," said he, " must personate me during my absence, and say that you have sent off your horse to Sir Amys. We will exchange dresses, and I hope to be in time to save the life of your leman, and to punish our common enemy. Our perfect resemblance will insure the success of our project, and

* started, and raised his eyes.

deceive all eyes, even those of my wife, whom I must commit during a few days to your discretion." After these words they embraced and separated.

The supposed Amylion proceeded on foot to the castle, and, having told a very plausible story respecting the horse,

Little and much, less and mare,
And all that ever in court were
Weened it had been so.
And when y-comen was the night,
Sir Amys, and the lady bright,
To bed gan they go:
And when they weren in bed laid,
Sir Amys his sword out-brayed,
And held it between hem two.

The lady, we may presume, was a good deal surprised, and perhaps startled at the introduction of this third inmate of her bed*: but her sup-

* A similar incident occurs in Sir Tristram, whom king Mark discovers lying by Ysonde, with a drawn sword between them; upon which he remarks:

"Gif they weren in sinne,
"Nought so they no ly:"

p. 152. stanza 23.—See also Mr. Scott's note on the passage, p. 325.

posed husband informed her that he found himself indisposed, and, apprehending that his fever might be infectious, had adopted this precaution for her security. This excuse satisfied her, and they continued to live on a footing of the greatest cordiality.

In the mean time, though Sir Amylion had used the utmost expedition, the day appointed for the battle arrived: the steward entered the lists, and, not meeting his expected adversary, loudly proclaimed that the traitor Sir Amys had fled into a distant country, and required that, according to the law held in such cases, his two pledges should be produced in his stead, and publicly burned. The duke, however reluctant, was compelled to issue this dreadful order, which, however, the officers who received it were in no haste to execute; so that while the fire was kindling, and the two ladies, who now began to despair of their deliverance, were approaching the place of execution, the knight appeared; and, riding up to the duke, whom he tauntingly reprimanded for his "unkindness" in wishing "to make roast of ladies bright," procured their immediate liberty. He then retired with them to be armed.

And richely they gan him *schrede* *,
With helm and plate and worthy weed;
His 'tire it was full gay.
And when he was on his steed,
" That God Almighty should him speed,"
Many man bade that day.
And as he rode out of the town,
A voice there come fro heaven adown,
That no man heard but he:
And said, " Knight! Syr Amylion!
" God, that suffred passion,
" Sent thee word by me!
" Gif thou this battle underfong,
" Thou shalt have aventures strong,
" Within these yeares three;
" Ere then the three years ben agone,
" A fouler man was never none,
" Certes, than thou shalt be.
" But, for thou art hend and free,
" Jesu thee sent word by me
" To warne thee anon:
" A more wretche than thou shalt be,
" In care, in sorrow, and poverte,
" Was never man worse begone.
" In all thy londe good and hende
" They that are thy beste friende,

* shroud, i. e. dress.

" Shall be thy moste foen:
" And thy wife, and all thy kin,
" Shall shun the stead that thou art in,
" And forsake thee everichon."
The hende knight stood still as stone,
And heard these wordes everichon,
That were so hard and *grylle* *:
He wist not what was best to don;
To flie, or to battell gon;
In heart he liked ill!
He thought " If I be known by name,
" Then shall my brother go to shame;
" With spite they will him spill!
" Certes," he said, " for dread of care,
" To save my truth will I not spare!
" Let God do all his will!"

Having formed this generous resolution, he spurred forward to the lists; and, having sworn, in apparent contradiction to the steward's allegation, " that he had never received any favours from Belisante," began the mortal combat; in which, after receiving a dangerous wound in the shoulder, he at length pierced his adversary to the heart, and, having cut off his head, presented it to the duke as an undeniable proof of his daugh-

* sharp.

ter's innocence. The delighted father rewarded him on the spot, by promising him, before all his barons, the possession of her hand, and the succession to the kingdom; and the supposed Sir Amys, now become the universal favourite, made a triumphant entry into the palace, where the best leeches that Italy could afford were summoned to dress his wounds. Their report was favourable; and though his shoulder, in spite of their skill, continued to give him pain, he was soon enabled to take his leave of the ladies, and to undertake his journey to rejoin Sir Amys, who had daily visited the appointed spot in the forest in hopes of meeting him. The joy of both was, as may be supposed, excessive. Sir Amys, on his return, was publicly married to the fair Belisante; and the death of the duke and of the duchess, shortly after, put him in possession of his inheritance, and placed him amongst the most powerful princes of Italy. To complete his happiness, he became, in the first two years of his marriage, the father of two beautiful children; and his mistress, perfectly cured of that petulance and vivacity of character which had occasioned so much guilt and misery, became the gentlest and most affectionate of wives.

We must now return to Sir Amylion, who,

having once more resumed his own character, returned to his castle, glowing with delight at having established for ever the fortunes and happiness of his friend; but occasionally reflecting with some uneasiness on the mysterious threatenings of the angel. But every melancholy reflection was lost in the pleasure of revisiting his wife, whom he loved with the most ardent fondness. At night, of course, the sword was forgotten, and the lady was much pleased at the omission; but she could not forbear from inquiring why he had thought fit, during a whole fortnight, to persevere in a ceremony which she was disposed to think very foolish and unnecessary. Amylion, to whom this information was quite new, and to whom it afforded an unequivocal proof of his friend's delicate sense of honour, had no answer ready; and, without considering the possible inconvenience of such a confession, frankly told her the whole story. The lady received it with indignation and disgust. She disdained to reproach him with having placed her, without her knowledge or consent, in a most awkward predicament with Sir Amys, but vented her fury on the rest of his conduct; loudly declaring that his friend had deserved to die; that his profligate mistress merited the severest punishment; and that the steward,

whom he had cruelly slain, was the only person for whom she felt esteem or regret. In vain did Sir Amylion attempt to pacify her, or to exculpate himself. Every hour added to her rage, which settled into the most mortal aversion; and this, it may be supposed, was not diminished by the effect of a hideous leprosy, which, as the angel had foretold, rendered him an object of loathing to all his acquaintance. Even his menials were unwilling to serve him, and were encouraged in their disobedience by their mistress.

And on a day she gan him call,
And said, "It is so befall,
"For sothe I tell it thee,
"It is great spite to us all,
"That thou hast been so long in hall:
"My kin is wrath with me!"
The knight wept, and said her till,
"Dame, do me there is thy will,
"That no man mo me see!
"Of no more good I thee pray,
"But o meal's meat a day
"For Sainte Charité."

Sir Amylion was now banished from his castle to a small hovel, which his wife caused to be built

at about half a mile from the gate, and to which he was attended only by a page of twelve years old, called Child Oneys, the son of a distant relation, who devoted himself to the service of a master abandoned by all the world, and inviolably preserved for a wretched outcast, the love and veneration which he had sworn to Sir Amylion when regarded as the pride and pattern of chivalry. For a time the miserable couple were supplied with a daily meal, which Child Oneys fetched from the castle; but at length the lady became tired of this liberality, and refused to contribute any longer to the support of a husband whom heaven, as she said, had marked with its most signal vengeance, and towards whom even charity was criminal. It now became necessary to procure their food from a distant town; and the feeble knight, unable to struggle with this fatigue, proposed to quit the country altogether, if his wife would enable him to do so by sending him an ass on which he could ride. She sent him two; and with these they departed, and, wandering from town to town, obtained a scanty subsistence by begging; till a grievous famine deprived them even of this poor supply. Sir Amylion still possessed his golden cup; but from this he had sworn that death alone should separate

him; he therefore sold the two asses, and continued his pilgrimage, Child Oneys carrying him with infinite labour on his back, till they could procure a small cart for his conveyance.

Then *crouded** the child Sir Amylioun,
In all the country, up and down,
As ye may understonde,
Till he com to a *cheping* † town,
There Sir Amys, the bold baroun,
Was duke and lord in londe.

The three years of punishment predicted by the angel were elapsed; and the wretched knight, an object of horror to his whole species, and only enabled by the utmost efforts of his almost naked attendant to protract his existence in pain and sickness, and under every species of privation, appeared to have exhausted to the last drop the cup of human calamity. While he sought, as a pauper, the gate of his noble friend, which was already crowded with mendicants, he strictly enjoined Oneys to conceal his name and rank; and the youth, in obedience to his orders, having wheeled him to the edge of the moat which surrounded the castle, stood over him, cold, hun-

* acted. † market.

gry and naked, expecting with patience a share of the duke's charitable donation.

Here they heard the sound of the trumpets which summoned the guests to table, and the shouts of laughter which filled the hall; and felt more keenly than ever the excess of their misery. At length a knight, accompanied by a serjeant, issued from the gate, and accidentally cast his eyes on the two wanderers. Never had he witnessed such a disgusting object as the leper, whose body seemed to be covered with one fetid sore; never had he beheld such manly beauty as in the youthful Oncys. He approached him; courteously inquired into his occupation; heard with infinite surprise that he was servant to the lazar in the cart; proposed to him to quit this degrading employment for the office of page in the duke's court; and was still more astonished at receiving a civil but firm refusal of this inviting offer. Virtue so disinterested was naturally construed by the courtier into madness. He returned into the hall, and, laughing heartily at the jest, related the anecdote to Sir Amys, who, looking on him with a smile of contempt, replied, that such a youth deserved, and should presently receive, an adequate reward: in the mean time he called a squire, and, filling his golden cup with

wine, directed that he should carry that to the lazar at the gate, and to his naked attendant.

The squire, having executed the order, was amazed at seeing the leper draw from under his sorry bed a second cup, exactly resembling that which he had brought. He surveyed them with the most minute attention; and, being unable to discover the slightest difference, hastened with this intelligence to the duke. Sir Amys now started from his seat, and, exclaiming that the pretended leper must have robbed his brother Amylion, vowed to sacrifice the wretch to his just resentment; and, rushing out of the hall, instantly seized the supposed culprit, drenched him in the moat, rolled him on the ground, trampled him under foot, and had raised his sword to put an end to his life, when Child Oneys, starting from the crowd of trembling spectators, suddenly caught the assailant in his arms; held him with a vigour which he was unable to resist; and, reproaching him with his cruelty towards the preserver of his life and honour, exclaimed,

"He is thy brother, Sir Amylion,
"That whilom was a noble baron,
"Both to ride and go:
"And now with sorrow is driven adown!

" Now God, that suffered passion,
" Bring him out of his wo!
" For thee, of bliss he is bare,
" And thou *yieldest* * him all with care,
" And breakest his bones a-two!
" That he halp thee at thy need
" Well enow acquittest thou his meed!
" Alas! why farest thou so?"

Sir Amys heard these words with the deepest contrition. He beheld, on the shoulder of the leper, the deep scar remaining from the wound inflicted by the steward; and, instantly recognising his brother, tenderly embraced him, and besought him to forgive his apparent ingratitude. He then re-entered the hall, bearing in his arms the wretch whom he had so lately vowed to destroy; and Belisante, when apprised of the story, stifling at once all emotions of horror and disgust, flew to meet and kiss her benefactor. From this moment every attention which affection could devise was employed to soften the horrors of his fate; and Sir Amylion, long accustomed to physical suffering, endured without a murmur the chastizement inflicted by Providence.

One night, as he lay in his bed, the angel ap-

* requitest.

peared to him in a vision, and declared to him that "if Sir Amys, on the festival of the Nativity, which was fast approaching, would cut the throats of his two children, and anoint the leprous sores with their blood, the disease, which was incurable by all other means, would instantly disappear;" and at the same time the same intelligence was conveyed by the angelic messenger to Sir Amys. A few hours after this, the friends being met as usual, Sir Amylion could not refrain from mentioning to his brother his extraordinary dream, to which, however, as he had received his former warning when perfectly awake, he attached little importance. Sir Amys kept silence; but, comparing his friend's dream with his own, was convinced that they were a warning from heaven. The feelings of a father pleaded powerfully against the sacrifice; but religion, and an enthusiastic sense of gratitude to his brother, prevailed. It was the eve of the Nativity, when he had been accustomed to spend the night in prayer; but he now directed Belisante to proceed with all the family to church, declaring that he would stay at home alone for the purpose of attending on Sir Amylion. The duchess obeyed, and he was left without witnesses.

Alone himself, withouten mo,
To his own chamber he gan go,
There his children were;
And he beheld hem bothe two,
How fair they layn together tho,
And playden both in fere.
Then said he, "By saint John,
"It is great rewth you to slon,
"That God hath bought so dear!"
His knife he had drawen that tide;
For sorrow he stood hem beside,
And wept with rewly cheer.
When he had wept there he stood,
Anon he turned again his mood,
Withouten more delay.
"My brother, that was true and good,
"For me he shed his owne blood,
"To save my life one day.
"Why should I, then, my children spare,
"To bring my brother out of care?
"Certes, (he said) nay!
"My brother to helpen at this need
"Jesu give me well to speed!
"And Mary that best may!"
No lonyer he ne stente ne stood;
He drew his knife with dreary mood,

His children he *hent* * tho;
And, for he would not spill her blood,
On a basyn fair and good
The throats he carfe a-two.

He then carefully replaced the children in bed, threw the clothes over them, locked the door, and concealed the key.

To his brother he wente than,
And said to the careful man,
Such time as God was born,
"I have thee brought my children's blood;
"I hope it shall do thee good,
"As the angel said beforn."
"Brother!" Sir Amylion gan say,
"Hast thou slain thy children tway?
"Alas! why didst thou so?"
He wept, and said, "Well away!
"I had liever, till doomesday,
"Have lain in sorrow and wo!"
"Brother," said Sir Amys, "be still!
"God may, when it is his will,
"Send me children mo:
"For me, of bliss thou art bare!
"Y-wiss, my life I would not spare
"To bring thee now therfro"

* seized

With these words, he anointed Sir Amylion with the blood, placed him in his bed, directed him to go to sleep in the full confidence of experiencing the mercy of heaven, and repaired to chapel; where, confessing his crime before the altar, he humbly implored his Redeemer and the blessed Virgin to intercede for a murderer, whose guilt had been produced by motives of the sincerest piety.

Belisante had no sooner finished her devotions than she hastened to behold and embrace her children; but her attendants, having vainly sought for the key, returned with an air of alarm, and reported that it was no where to be found. Sir Amys sternly ordered them to depart, and, being left alone with his wife, communicated to her, with much agitation, the dreadful scene which had taken place during her absence. The wretched mother fainted in his arms, and appeared for some time as lifeless as her children; but, on her recovery, reading in her husband's countenance the agony of his heart, she suddenly resumed her courage, and exerted herself to sooth and console him, adding to the argument, which he had already used to Sir Amylion,

" And gif it were at my heart' root,
" For to bring thy brother boot,

" My life should I not spare!
" There shall no man our children sene;
" For to-morrow they shall buried ben,
" As they fairly dead were."

She then hurried him to the chamber of the leper, whom they found miraculously restored to his former health; and having humbly adored the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, they thought their minds sufficiently tranquil to contemplate with pious resignation the frightful sacrifice by which they had purchased their friend's recovery. They entered the fatal room; involuntarily shuddered as they approached the bed; and beheld the children just awakened from a refreshing sleep, and sporting together, utterly unconscious of the pangs which they had cost their anxious parents, and unable to account for the flood of silent tears which fell upon them from the eyes of Sir Amys, while he strained them alternately to his heart, and transferred them to the embraces of the weeping Belisante.

The author, true to the principles of romance, has thought fit to hurry us from this striking picture to a series of events which are not at all interesting, but which he thought necessary for

the purpose of duly rewarding the virtue of Child Oneys. The reader will remember that the wife of Amylion had increased, by all the means in her power, the sufferings of her husband; that she had insensibly possessed herself of all his inheritance; and that Sir Amys, as her suzerain, could not justly suffer her to retain a great feudal lordship and a castellated mansion. On the other hand, Sir Amylion, now in full health, had little to do; and Child Oneys was of an age to enter on the career of chivalry. Sir Amys therefore collected a body of his vassals, and began his march, accompanied by Sir Amylion and Oneys, to recover the fief. The exploit was not difficult. The lady had thought fit to select a new husband, and was actually celebrating the bridal feast when the troops entered the hall. The guests, who were numerous but unarmed, dispersed in all directions, and escaped as well as they could; the lady was seized, and kept in durance for the rest of her life; Sir Amylion formally re-entered into possession of his estates, and, having summoned all his vassals, caused them to take the oath of allegiance to Child Oneys. He then returned with Sir Amys, whom he never more quitted; and the two brothers, after

many years of happiness, passed the decline of life in founding and endowing an abbey, and in other acts of charity and devotion.

Bothe on o day they beth dead,
And in o grave they weren laid,
These hende knightes both two:
And, for her truth, and her goodhede,
The bliss of heaven they had to mede,
That lasteth ever mo.

THE END.

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